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...TYRANT
...d Pryce-Jones

Jay Nordlinger on the Democrats' Attack Man

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Good Fellas

BOYS, FATHERS, AND THE ASSAULT ON MASCULINITY

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A world of ideas on public policy.

How Productive is Drug Consumption?

By H E Frech III and Richard D Miller, PhD

Any international comparative study of health care invariably uncovers the fact that the amount of pharmaceuticals people consume varies greatly from country to country. Even among the most economically advanced countries, wide disparities exist.

In France, for example, per capita consumption of pharmaceutical drugs was five times that of Denmark in 1990. In the same year, Italians consumed twice as many pharmaceuticals as Americans. The situation prompts an obvious question: Are patients and physicians in these countries acting rationally or merely wasting medical resources?

Different patterns of national drug use have been seized upon by the popular press as "evidence" that many wealthy countries are spending too much money on pharmaceuticals. For instance, doctors in Japan, where drug consumption is particularly high, have been accused of aggressively over-prescribing.

Surprisingly, few studies have been made to determine whether this skepticism about the value of drug consumption is justified. Although there have been countless studies comparing health care across OECD countries, most of these, driven by an obsession with cost containment, have concentrated on national budgets and spending patterns. These studies tell us much about the determinants of health care in a given country, but tell us far less about the determinants of health itself.

In a recent study, we attempted to address this issue by comparing the health effects of pharmaceutical consumption across countries. We started by using the available data from 21 OECD countries and used a crude but objective measure of health: life expectancy at birth, at age 40, and at age 60.

We also considered and controlled for other significant variables that might influence life expectancy. A nation's wealth, understandably, contributes significantly to longer life expectancy. Less expected was the fact that, up to a point, richness of diet (measured by the consumption of animal fat) has a positive and more significant impact on longevity for those of 40 and 60 than either smoking or alcohol consumption.

Pharmaceutical consumption... proved to be a surprisingly productive factor for life expectancy

Contrary to much prevailing belief, our study found no statistically significant relationship between a country's non-pharmaceutical health care consumption and life expectancy. Pharmaceutical consumption, on the other hand, proved to be a surprisingly productive factor for life expectancy at age 40 and again at age 60.

More precisely, we found that if a country were to double its pharmaceutical expenditures, life expectancy at age 40 would increase by roughly 2 percent. For those age 60, it would increase by about 4 percent. This means that a typical 60 year old male living in a country with the average life expectancy could expect to see his remaining life expectancy rise from 18.5 years to 19.2 years. For a 60 year old female, life expectancy would expand by a full year from 22.5 to 23.5 years.

These findings hold great promise for the health of citizens in countries where drug consumption is relatively low. Countries such as France, Italy, Germany, and Belgium, which are already the biggest pharmaceutical consumers, would derive a fairly small marginal benefit from increasing their consumption levels further. But in countries such as Ireland or Turkey, where drug consumption is extremely low by OECD standards, life expectancy for middle-aged citizens could be improved dramatically, simply by increasing the overall level of national drug consumption.

Our study even allows us to quantify the effect. For every additional dollar spent on pharmaceuticals in Turkey, for example, the 40 year old male would increase life expectancy by nearly a week. Every additional dollar spent in Ireland would increase life expectancy for a 60 year old female by nearly 3.5 days.

We believe that these findings will contribute to the debate over how OECD governments should allocate scarce medical resources. While the traditional emphasis on the effects of health care spending is useful, we hope our study can help guide policy makers to focus on the most important goal of all health care systems: longer, healthier lives.

Dr Frech is Professor of Economics at the University of California, Santa Barbara and Adjunct Professor at Sciences Po de Paris. Dr Miller is a research analyst at CNA Corporation, Alexandria, Virginia, USA. A fuller account of this research has been published by the American Enterprise Institute, Washington, DC, www.aei.org.

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Linda Bridges / Richard Brookhiser / Jeffrey Hart
Ramesh Ponnuru / David Pryce-Jones
Managing Editor Jay Nordlinger
Washington Editor Kate O'Beirne
Literary Editor Adam Bellow
Executive Editor Dorothy McCartney
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Advertising Manager Todd Westover
Account Executive Elizabeth Capano
Detroit Rep. Joseph J. Colucci 248-626-9918

PUBLISHER
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■ LETTERS ■

THE CLINTONIZED MILITARY

"Rewriting the Last War" by Andrew J. Bacevich (June 5) is painfully accurate. The Gulf War had gone a great way toward healing the long-festering wounds the U.S. military suffered at the hands of Washington during the Vietnam conflict. The military was struggling to rid itself of those who would toady to politicians at the expense of military readiness. Then came Clinton. He started off by reaching as far down in the pile of senior officers as was necessary to find toadies to replace the Powells and Schwarzkopfs. The military lost most of its thinking generals. Then he chose a Republican toady to run the Defense Department.

The gutting of the military began in earnest—social experiments, downgraded physical and mental requirements, funds cut or diverted to non-military recipients, changes in the military's traditional retirement system, and countless debilitating deployments to far-flung places in response to "crises" that mattered only to the White House. The Air Force is unraveling in such a way that we will need a decade of rebuilding and retraining to restore it to Gulf War standards.

Falsification of the facts about Kosovo is just the tip of the iceberg.

Bob Lantz (USAF, retired)

TWO VIEWS ON ELIÁN

My favorite misanthrope, Florence King, goes overboard when she says she was "relieved" when the INS tore Elián from the arms of his extended family ("The Misanthrope's Corner," June 5). She'd grown tired of his story. Was she "relieved" when tedious Waco was burned? God help anyone Florence King or Janet Reno finds tiresome.

Ms. King goes on to analyze the photo of the INS agent in the González home and concludes that the gun was not pointed at Elián. Judging from the look on his face, it's clear that Elián lacked her perspective.

John Ducker
Hurdle Mills, N.C.

Your magazine's numerous pieces concerning the Elián González affair have convinced me that the conservatism that you represent is just as elitist as the liberalism that you despise. Any viewpoint that can possibly assert that it is correct to separate a child from a parent who has done nothing wrong is flawed at the core. I am disappointed.

James P. Ledwell
Middletown, Md.

AND ANOTHER THING

The pieces by Ramesh Ponnuru and Kate O'Beirne on the Social Security debate included great information ("Taking on the Biggest," "A Politician Steps Up," June 5). Gov. Bush has taken on the issue at the right time and in the correct manner.

But the best argument for changing or eliminating the current Social Security system has not yet been mentioned. It is an argument that can be used for eliminating a large portion of what the federal government does: It is unconstitutional. Social Security as we know it is a flagrant violation of the Tenth Amendment. If something is not specifically stated in the Constitution as a power of the federal government, it is reserved to the states and to the people. What could be more of a right of the people than to control their own money?

W. Scott Jett
North Wildwood, N.J.

AMERICAN BEAUTY

Jay Nordlinger is exactly right about Meredith Willson's *The Music Man* ("One Vote for Willson," June 5). It is indeed the finest American musical to date. He might also have mentioned that the movie version is one of the all-time best translations of a musical to the big screen. It is true to the original, with an excellent cast.

Bruce Bartlett
Great Falls, Va.

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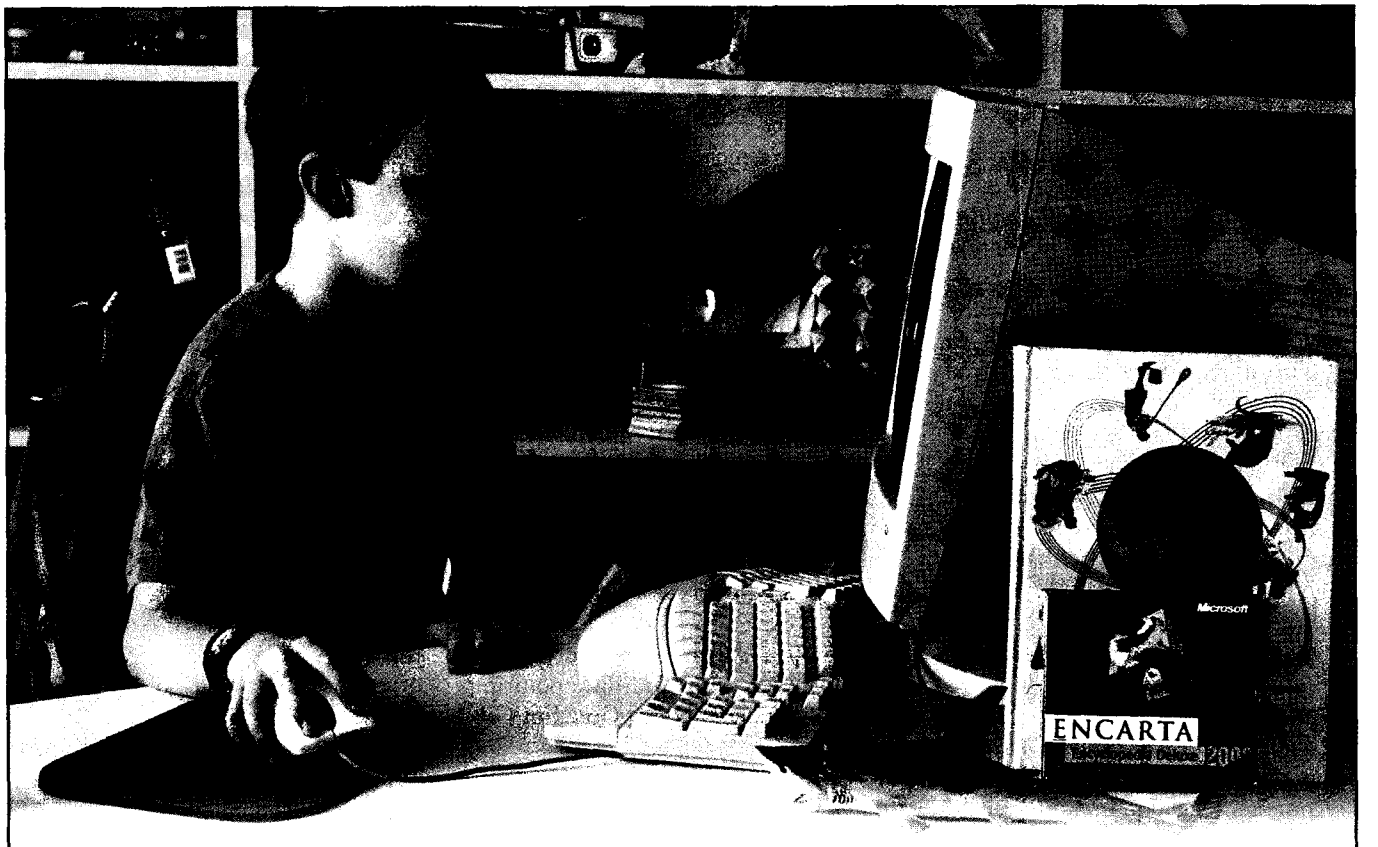

It used to be hard to get my son to concentrate. Now it's hard to get him not to.

"He loves to explore on the computer, and learn new things. When he has a question I can't answer, we search the Internet together..."

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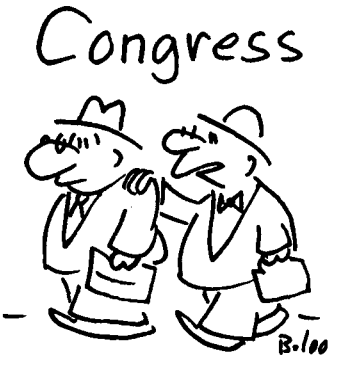
■ FOR THE RECORD ■

■ President **Clinton**, in Russian interview: "I have been lampooned in America a lot. There is almost nothing anybody can say to make fun of me that hasn't been said already. . . . Of course, from time to time you read something that you believe is either untrue or unfair, or maybe you're afraid it is true and you just wish it weren't printed." . . . "I think fado now has become my major passion in life," says Clinton in Lisbon, referring to what *New York Times* calls "the melancholic Portuguese music with words that yearn for a past that never was and may never be again." . . . Clinton refuses gift of Cuban cigar from German chancellor **Gerhard Schroeder**.

■ **Gore** campaign still pays about $31,000 per month on office space in Washington, D.C., it hasn't been able to lease out since headquarters moved to Nashville, reports *Washington Post*. . . . Gore, on his critics, in *Vogue*: "I don't care. They're gonna say something. So, be who I am. Don't want to change, not gonna change, can't change, don't want to change. That's just who I am. I say take it or leave it. I hope they'll take it." . . . White House says Gore e-mails from 1998 and 1999 may no longer exist. . . . Service Employees International Union hand-delivers $1 million check to Democrats. . . . Teamsters president **James Hoffa** says his union may not endorse a presidential candidate this year.

■ *The Hotline*'s survey of polls shows **George W. Bush** ahead in 26 states worth 282 electoral votes and Gore ahead in 13 states worth 178 electoral votes (270 needed to win). . . . **Trent Lott** promotes Sen. **Pete Domenici** (R., N.M.) as Bush's running mate; some conservatives warm to idea because it removes him from budget-committee chairmanship. . . . Former defense secretary **Donald Rumsfeld**'s name floated as potential Bush veep pick. . . . Wisconsin governor **Tommy Thompson**, head of GOP platform committee, says party's abortion plank won't change. . . . Whither the gender gap? In *Glamour* poll, 40 percent of readers for Bush, 40 percent for Gore. . . . **Gerald Ford** urges Bush to pick pro-abortion running mate: "To me, freedom means nothing if not the freedom to choose." . . . Democrat **James Carville**, in nationalreview.com interview: "The Republican party is not going to put [Pennsylvania governor Tom] **Ridge** in. They're not going to have a pro-choice veep. We're not going to have a pro-life veep—much less president. It's just the nature of the parties."

■ Rep. **Rick Lazio**: "Being a New Yorker is more than moving into a multimillion-dollar house and putting on a Yankee cap." . . . **Hillary Rodham Clinton** appears at a New York reporters' dinner with a carpetbag. . . . Sen. **John Warner** (R., Va.) indicates he will run for reelection in 2002, disappointing conservatives who hoped Gov. **Jim Gilmore** (R.) might capture open seat. . . . Virginia NAACP official suspended for supporting Republican **George Allen**'s Senate bid. . . . Alabama judge who displayed Ten Commandments in courtroom is Republican nominee for state supreme court. . . . **Mary Matalin**, in *Hotline* interview: "Is [CNN] teeming with liberals? Yes. But I've never worked anywhere in this industry where that wasn't the case. The industry just seems to attract a lot of liberals. Even most technicians are liberals." . . . NR editor-at-large **John O'Sullivan** becomes editor-in-chief of United Press International.



"It's not just your *constituents, Ed—*nobody *outside the Beltway understands."*

■ FBI director **Louis Freeh** wants to quit, but refuses to give Clinton opportunity to pick successor for job with 10-year term, reports *New York Post*. . . . Air Force chief of staff Gen. **Michael Ryan** warns military-readiness problems rival those experienced at start of Korean War. . . . Pentagon corrects what it calls clerical error, lowers estimate of U.S. battle deaths in Korean War by nearly 50 percent, from 54,246 to 36,940. . . . Ford, General Motors, and DaimlerChrysler announce jointly they will offer benefits to gay partners of employees who have shared a "committed relationship for no less than six months," but won't extend benefits to unmarried heterosexual couples. . . . More than 100,000 condoms have been ordered for competitors at this year's Sydney Olympics, in a range of colors, including gold, silver, and bronze. . . . Judge says National Park Service can take control of privately owned 307-ft. observation tower in Gettysburg, Pa., through eminent domain. . . . ABC sues Michigan for refusing to allow on-camera interview with **Jack Kevorkian**, currently serving a 10- to 25-year sentence for second-degree murder. . . . National D-Day Museum opens in New Orleans. . . . Deaf schoolteacher sues *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire* for violating Americans with Disabilities Act by not accommodating deaf people during telephone rounds.

■ Russian president **Vladimir Putin**, at news conference with Clinton: "We're familiar with the programs of the two major candidates . . . No matter who gets to be president, we're willing to go forward on either of these approaches." . . . **Fidel Castro**: "We are aware the Congressional Black Caucus has shown great interest in **Elián**'s case. . . . We wish to have more contacts with the Congressional Black Caucus on other issues." . . . Longtime NR contributor and Indian politician **M. R. Masani** dies in Bombay. . . . German court rules that anti-abortion protesters can use "Babycaust" to refer to abortion.

■ From **David Letterman**'s "Top Ten Al Gore Tenant Pet Peeves": "Rent's a day late, Janet Reno orders break-in to take checkbook. . . . Endless stories about how [Gore] invented the mailbox." **NR**

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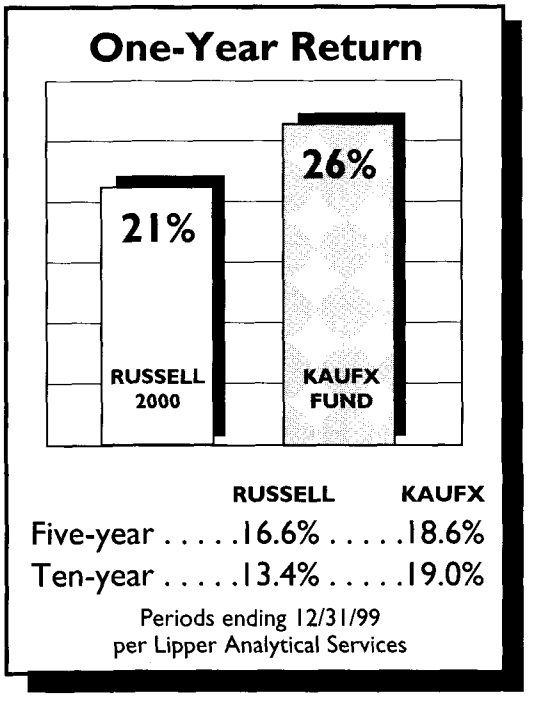
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THE WEEK

■ Hillary Clinton to Rick Lazio, after he fell in the street and split his lip: "You better put some ice on that."

■ In a *New York Times* profile of George W.'s years at Andover, Nicholas D. Kristof writes that Bush was a "mediocre student" who "paled in comparison with his father . . . who had been brilliant at everything he did." But when George the Elder was running against clever Michael Dukakis, all we heard about was how mediocre he had been in school. It's called grading on a curve: Any Republican is smart, except the one running for president.

■ Maybe former President Bush is just a late bloomer.

■ A REPORT YOU'LL NEVER SEE: Watching the media discussion of how George W. Bush could broaden his base by picking pro-choice Pennsylvania governor Tom Ridge as his running mate, the Al Gore campaign has begun considering a similar, outside-the-box appeal. Pro-lifer Ray Flynn, former Boston mayor and ambassador to the Vatican, is being short-listed for the Democratic number-two slot. "Democrats can agree to disagree," Gore campaign manager Donna Brazile said. Feminists have not hit the panic button. "There are more issues for women than abortion," NOW president Patricia Ireland said. Gore adviser Tony Coelho thinks Flynn makes fundraising sense. While conceding that "big-ticket donors" are all pro-choice, he argued that the party can ill afford to ignore "folks who give $10, $20." Political observers agree the discussion is "a smart move," in the words of *Wall Street Journal* columnist Al Hunt, even if Flynn doesn't get the nod. "You can't ignore the opinions of millions of Americans."

■ Jon Corzine spent $30 million of his own money to win the New Jersey Democratic Senate primary. Groans all round, at the state of campaign-finance laws. But Corzine could have won without spending that fortune: His opponent, former governor Jim Florio, is still the most unpopular politician in the state, for having raised taxes during a recession ten years ago. Corzine will, if possible, be even worse than Florio should he win in November: The lefty former Goldman Sachs exec supports universal health care and a "free" college education for high-school grads with a B average or better. New Jersey's real problem is what its politicians do with everybody else's money.

■ The Club for Growth, a free-market PAC run by NR contributing editor Stephen Moore, made an auspicious debut on the political scene—coming close to toppling a liberal Republican who has served ten terms in Congress. New Jersey congresswoman Marge Roukema was able to win only by moving sharply to the right and leaning on House leaders. Roukema Republicans be warned: The Club for Growth is just getting started.

■ The case of little Elián González has been full of perplexities for conservatives, involving as it has issues of immigration policy and parental rights. Another conundrum was revealed by the federal appellate panel's June 1 decision upholding the right of the INS to permit the boy's father to take him back to Cuba. "Although the courts should not be unquestioning, we should respect the other branches' policy-making powers," said the decision. "The judicial power is a limited power." These are heartening words for conservatives to hear . . . if only they did not mean, in this case, that a child whose mother died to give him freedom is to be shipped back into slavery. We should applaud the three judges for their proper and well-argued restraint. Some of us might even confess a sneaking admiration for the boldness the administration has displayed in pursuing its malign ends in this case. But wait: Isn't there a third branch of government in the United States? What's it called again? Someone remind us, please.

■ Now that the Cuban-American community has been Kathleen Willeyed and Fidel Castro successfully repackaged as a champion of family values, the administration can deal with Cuban defectors as it pleases, without any risk of negative media reaction. The latest victim of this new brazenness is Cuban baseball star Andy Morales, intercepted at sea by the U.S. Coast Guard with 32 others attempting to flee the Caribbean worker's paradise. Morales was shipped back to the plantation on the grounds that he could demonstrate no "well-founded fear of persecution." It may be true that he had no such fear until the instant he stepped into the boat; from that moment on, however, his career and life prospects changed drastically. As Morales's Miami father-in-law expressed it: "They buried him alive and all the family." Even before Morales landed back in Cuba, the government-controlled press (theirs, not ours) was already publishing articles denigrating his playing skills. On the bright side, though, Andy Morales was spared the 5 A.M. raid by armed INS agents.

■ Supply-side economics lives. Almost a third of House Democrats crossed party lines to vote to repeal the estate tax. This is a tax levied on top of at least two other layers of tax: Americans pay when they earn money, pay again when they

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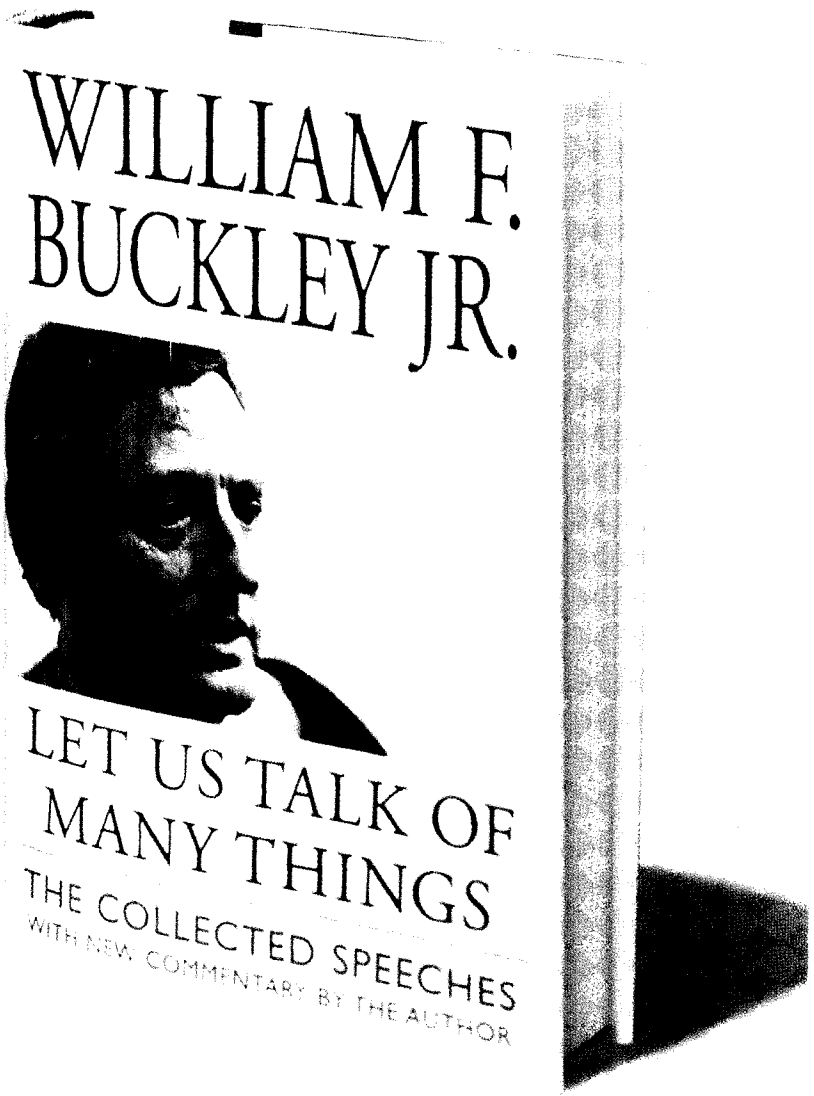

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save it, and pay once more when they pass it on. The estate tax is also extraordinarily complex, accounting for as much as 10 percent of the tax code. Defenders say that only 2 percent of Americans pay the tax; but many more juggle their assets to avoid paying it, and still more are affected by it indirectly. President Clinton threatens a veto, but repeal is popular (as evidenced by the House vote). Clinton will doubtless play the class-warfare card, saying that most people do not have a large estate. True enough. But in investor America, a lot of people can hope to build one.

■ To no one's surprise, Judge Thomas Penfield Jackson accepted the Justice Department's recommendation that Microsoft be split up. "Plaintiffs won the case," Judge Jackson writes, "and for that reason alone have some entitlement to a remedy of their choice." Whether this remedy improves the public welfare, Judge Jackson admits he does not know. Such concerns do not appear to be at the forefront of his mind. His order fairly crackles with anger at Microsoft's temerity in having resisted dismemberment—indeed, in having defended itself at all. The case has, in short, become an illustration of the excessive discretion that antitrust law gives to judges.

■ Democrats are threatening to kill a burgeoning industry that serves the financial needs of the working poor. Called payday-advance services, these companies let people borrow against their next paycheck. Someone who needs $200 right away can get it in return for writing a check for $230 dated a few weeks in the future. The transaction is quick, does not show up on credit records, and is generally cheaper than the cost of a bounced check or late payment. But Naderite consumer groups say the industry is "predatory." They want Congress to cap the companies' fees at an absurdly low rate, or to prohibit them from holding postdated checks drawn on federally insured institutions (which would rule out banks). Rep. John LaFalce, a Democrat from New York, is toying with both ideas. The payday-advance companies look more like prey than predators.

■ The war on drugs has claimed a new casualty: free speech. The Methamphetamine Anti-Proliferation Act, passed unanimously by the Senate, now goes to the House for what will likely be swift approval. The bill is intended "to provide for the punishment of methamphetamine laboratory operators, provide additional resources to combat methamphetamine production, trafficking, and abuse in the United States, and"—here comes the ominous part—"for other purposes." These "other purposes" include significant jail time for merely talking about drugs: three years for "posting," "publicizing," or even "linking to" certain types of information; ten years for teaching or demonstrating use. Vague, yet restrictive, intended to punish words rather than actions, and most certainly punitive—the bill reads like a primer on drug-war excess.

■ Vladimir Putin suddenly has an interest in ballistic-missile defense. He has been shopping around Europe the idea of a limited, theater defense system that would protect Europe and Russia from rogue-state launches. Putin's conversion proves that, as far as the Russians are concerned, there's nothing wrong with missile defense so long as it doesn't protect America. His maneuver is a naked ploy to split our European allies from us, and prolong their agitation in favor of keeping the U.S. locked into the ABM Treaty. Sen. Joe Biden argues that such a limited system would afford the U.S. protection, too. But to protect us, a system would have to shoot down intercontinental missiles, and would thus not be considered *theater* defense, but *national* missile defense—banned by the ABM Treaty. Such are the wise and subtle distinctions of arms control. If Europe wants protection, it should support a full-blown U.S. missile-defense program that could shield European cities as well. There's no reason the defense of Paris and Madrid should come at the price of the vulnerability of Los Angeles and New York.

Al Gore, Slumlord

The vice president has been neglecting his woebegone tenants down on his farm in Carthage, Tenn. Their plumbing is overflowing, their home is crumbling, and they have so far received no relief. Mr. Gore and his men are increasingly annoyed by the complaints of these upstart serfs. Our Roman Genn captures the situation.

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[illegible] the Patients' Bill of Rights

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■ While Putin is working on our allies, an MIT physicist named Ted Postol has been hawking the idea that missile defense will inevitably be a laughable failure. This has made him the most mediagenic scientist since Carl Sagan. Postol maintains that the military has been dumbing down its missile-defense tests to avoid inevitable failures when a system has to distinguish between real missiles and decoy balloons. He makes much of the fact that, after the two initial missile-defense tests, the military has lately used simpler decoys. But the later tests were designed actually to shoot down missiles, whereas the first two only tested missile-detection technology—i.e., the later task was more complicated, so the challenge was (for the time being) made easier. Postol says that a missile-defense system "will be defeated by the simplest of balloon decoys." The simplest? Last October, in a test involving a missile and a decoy, an interceptor successfully destroyed its target. As Sagan repeatedly demonstrated, mediagenic scientists have a way of being spectacularly wrong about public policy.

■ In death, Syrian leader Hafiz Assad found many friends. Lebanon's prime minister Salim Hoss called his passing a "tragedy that struck Lebanon in the heart." Since Assad had been striking Lebanon in the heart for more than 20 years, in a successful effort to make it a Syrian satellite, Mr. Hoss's display of grief is understandable. But who pulls the strings in Egypt? "The most noble partner in peace" (Hosni Mubarak). At the U.N.? "A great loss . . . for the Arab world and the region as a whole" (Kofi Annan). In Britain? "A figure of stability . . . much respected in the Arab world and beyond" (Tony Blair). Here? President Clinton was "saddened." Assad was a thug, a member of a small heretical sect (the Alawis) who nevertheless managed to gain and keep power by killing anyone who threatened to unseat, or even criticize him. Courtesy and diplomacy require the recitation of certain formulae, but when these become too baroque, they disgust. Ladies and gentlemen, a little respect for truth and decency, please.

■ In a recent *New York Review of Books* article, James Traub makes the point that Sierra Leone enjoyed a relatively peaceful holiday in the midst of its Walpurgisnacht when the nominal government hired a firm of South African mercenaries (with the wonderful name "Executive Outcomes") to impose order. They did it, with only 200 (mostly black) troops. The civilized world, Traub argues, could do the same if it were willing to behave like the pros, and unlike U.N. peacekeepers—i.e., by shooting troublemakers. Traub ignores an important point, though: Executive Outcomes was paid $35 million from Sierra Leone's diamond crop. Imperial powers policed the world for God or national glory. Hired guns will do it—for hire. But the world in which foreign powers, or international bodies, will extend themselves without some equally tangible motive is Utopia—nowhere.

■ As part of his bold program to transform Zimbabwe from a peaceful and moderately prosperous country to just another fly-specked African sinkhole, President Robert Mugabe continues his assault on the one remaining productive sector of the nation's economy. On June 7 he announced that his government will seize 804 white-owned farms, and that if other white farmers are permitted to remain in possession of their property it will be as an act of charity on the part of Zimbabwe's black majority. Would that be the same population that delivered a startling repudiation of Mugabe's rule in a February referendum? And that is due to vote in parliamentary elections June 24 and 25? And that is being terrorized by touring truckloads of Mugabe supporters who beat—sometimes murdering—anyone displaying support for the opposition? Yes, it would. The U.S. government murmured its disapproval; but since Mugabe is not the white ruler of a delinquent Balkan state, or the Japanese-descended president of a terrorist-plagued South American one, he has little worse to fear from that quarter.

■ The European Commission proposed affirmative-action legislation for women. At least the rhetoric was appropriate: "five-year program" and "structural changes," indeed. One provision reverses the burden of proof in sexual-harassment cases so that men will now be required to prove their innocence—an especially difficult task since anything that affects the "dignity of women" may be considered sexual harassment. The primary purpose of the bill, however, is to grant women "automatic priority" in jobs where they are "underrepresented." Thus, an employer accused of violating EU regulations would have to prove that the woman complainant was manifestly less qualified than the chosen alternative. Such court cases promise to do wonders for relations between the sexes.

■ The Scripps Howard National Spelling Bee is an intense and mentally exhausting contest, slashing a field of 248 boys and girls down to one in the space of 15 rounds. This year, the three finalists in the contest all had one thing in common: They were homeschooled. The victor was twelve-year-old George Thampy. The previous week, he had earned second place in the National Geography Bee. Indeed, there are few academic fields where the homeschooled have not achieved impressive recognition. Yet the National Education Association still continues to denounce homeschooling, which it says "cannot provide the student with a comprehensive education experience." Maybe not. But it does seem to teach children how to read and write—which is more than can be said of a lot of the schools for which the NEA is responsible.

■ Congress has done something relatively small, but dumb and annoying: It has approved a resolution allowing the Washington Opera to call itself the "National Opera." There is nothing "national" about the Washington Opera; it just happens to reside in Washington, D.C. It is not an opera company of America's first rank: Those in Chicago and San Francisco, not to mention two in New York, are clearly supe-

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The Washington Times

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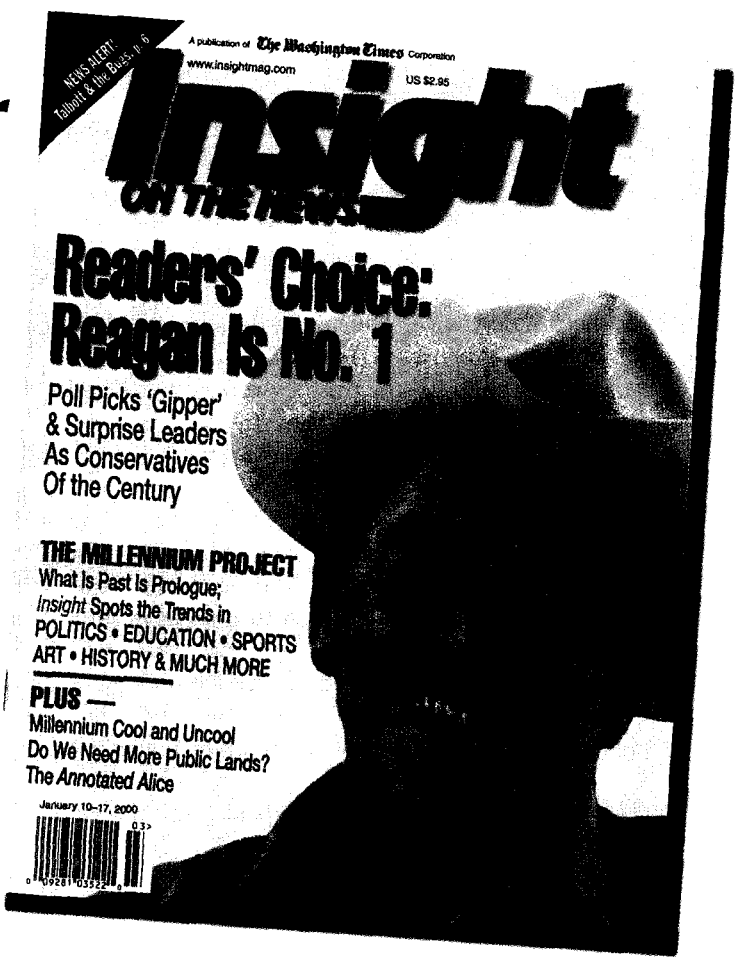

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rior. And while we're grousing, why should the orchestra in Washington be known as the "National Symphony Orchestra"? It is no more distinguished than the Big Five (Cleveland, Chicago, Philadelphia, New York, Boston), and not even more distinguished than the orchestras in Detroit, Houston, L.A., Minneapolis, Atlanta, etc. Traditionally, it is stifling socialist countries that have slapped "national" on everything. This should not be the work of the American republic, whose cultural capitals are many, and whose central government should eschew favoritism. The Washington Opera is no more the national opera company than the Wizards are the national basketball team.

■ The key issue of curriculum has surfaced at the State University of New York, a sprawling system with headquarters in Albany. The University trustees voted recently for a required undergraduate curriculum that includes natural sciences, mathematics, foreign languages, Western civilization (!!), American history, world civilization, and the humanities and the arts. This of course represents a counterrevolution against the smorgasbord curriculum prevalent just about everywhere in recent years, featuring victimology, "trangressive" studies, film noir, pathological sexuality, Rigoberta-ism, and other whatnot nescience. The faculty union at SUNY is outraged, as is the American Association of University Professors, charging politics—the trustees were all appointed by Gov. Pataki—and violation of academic freedom. May the grownups prevail, and inspire trustees elsewhere.

■ We have come to know awards shows—the Oscars, the Emmys, etc.—as forums for left-liberal claptrap. So we almost fell off our chairs during the Tonys, when the British actor Roy Dotrice accepted his award for "best featured actor in a play" (in O'Neill's *A Moon for the Misbegotten*). "I was in a German prisoner-of-war camp," he said, "and it was there that I had my first contact with Americans. I found that they had a unique ability: the ability not to envy, but to applaud other people's successes. And it was then that I fell in love with Americans and America, and that love affair has gone on through the years. I would like to think that it is epitomized by this gift from you tonight, which I would like to think of as a token of mutual affection. I hope you will allow me to share whatever talent I have with you in the years to come in this country—this wonderful country. God bless America." God bless *you*, Mr. Dotrice.

■ Playing in his first game for the International League Richmond Braves, after being sent down by the Atlanta Braves, John Rocker got a full-throated standing ovation, even though he was appearing on the home turf of the Toledo Mud Hens, the team he was pitching against. John Rocker said some things that were rude (and some that were funny), and he has a temper. His pitching has also, not surprisingly, been off. But in a sports culture of drugs, bastardy, and crime, his offenses were utterly trivial. Fans know he's gotten the bum's rush. Let them cheer on.

■ A new ad for Nike sports footwear promotes the cause of gender-blind equal pay for equal effort in athletics. Track star Marion Jones argues that since women sweat as much as men they deserve the same pay. Setting aside some flaws in Ms. Jones's logic (should a three-set women's tennis match pay as much as a five-set men's?), there is something unsettling about product commercials pushing social-policy issues—especially since, as we all know, the only policies so promoted will be those favored by the left-liberal clerisy. Do not expect that anytime soon you will see Budweiser ads arguing for Second Amendment rights, or General Motors spicing up its latest SUV commercial with a few words in favor of school choice.

■ O. J. Simpson called up *Fox News Live* to deny that he'd ever failed a lie-detector test, and to accuse Nicole Simpson's sister of wanting to sleep with him, and to rail at Nicole Simpson's sister. Simpson should not be criticized for his behavior. He is what he is: a vain, impulsive brute; anything he does after the savage double murder he committed is trivia. Rather, the public should be criticized for its ongoing behavior toward him. Simpson is routinely asked for autographs when he is out in public; TV shows take his calls. Nobody has to do these things, yet they get done. In other words, Simpson cannot further stain himself; only we can do that.

■ Tina Brown, chairman of Talk/Miramax books, announced that she was canceling a hatchet job on Ken Starr and his investigators (*The Insane Clown Posse* by John Connolly). This was after Matt Drudge revealed on his website that Connolly was planning to out six Starr employees as homosexuals. The fracas proved that the Clinton defense team, like Japanese soldiers hiding in the jungles of South Pacific islands, will go on fighting, lying, and sliming enemies, long after the war is over. Except, of course, that Japan lost.

■ Jacques Barzun's new book, *From Dawn to Decadence* (reviewed in our May 22 issue), is a bestseller—Number 3 on the *New York Times* list, Number 1 at Amazon. This is good, and important, news. The book ranks among the masterworks of the historian's craft, right up there with Burckhardt, Gibbon, Huizinga, its cultural substance delivered in a lucid and witty style. It dares to celebrate the achievements of Western civilization. Run, don't walk.

■ Stephen Ambrose calls it his greatest accomplishment—which, for the prolific and best-selling historian, is saying a lot. In New Orleans on June 6, Ambrose and his partner Nick Mueller cut the ribbon on the National D-Day Museum. Finished just in time for the opening, it stands as a beachhead of sorts, promising to carry the memory of the Normandy invasion, and the many other "D-Days" of the war, into new American centuries. The idea for the museum came to Ambrose soon after Dwight D. Eisenhower asked the young professor to be his biographer. In an early meeting,

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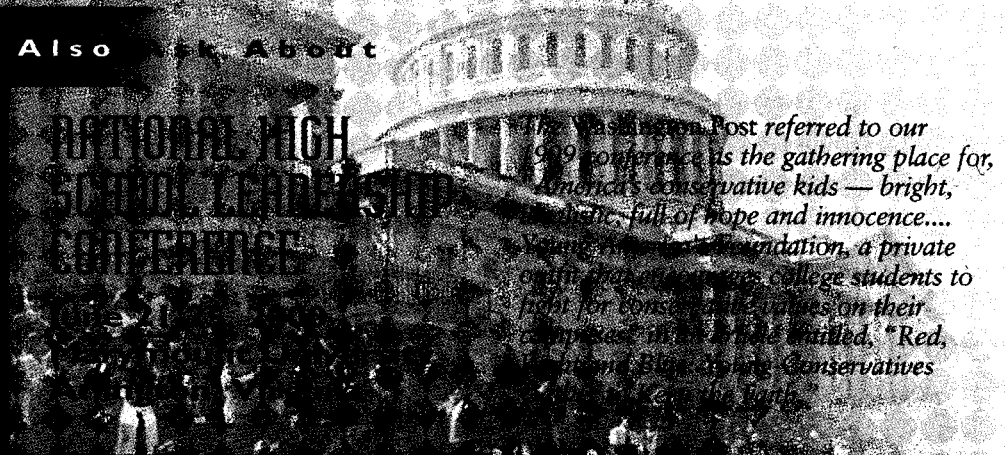

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Eisenhower told Ambrose that a man named Andy Higgins had "won the war for us." Higgins, a New Orleans native, was the father of the amphibious landing craft that carried the GIs to Normandy, Sicily, Iwo Jima, and other shores. The image of a boat and an unheralded man winning the war startled Ambrose—and changed him for life. At a parade preceding the grand opening, WWII veterans passed in Army-issue trucks, waving to the boisterous lines along the streets of New Orleans. Ambrose and Mueller are to be lauded for attaching a secure lifeline to the memory of that war, to the craftsman who made victory attainable, and to the brave citizen-soldiers who won it.

■ Sinead O'Connor, buzz-cut rocker and priestess in a sect of pseudo-Catholics, has just announced she is a lesbian (she has two children, by two different men). At last, a pope Garry Wills could live with.

CAMPAIGN 2000

The Right Campaign

THE conventional explanation for why George W. Bush is doing well in the polls is that he has "moved to the center" after taking "a hard-right tack" in the primaries. The trouble with this formulation is that Bush's stump speech has barely changed through all the tumult of the last year. His real accomplishment is more impressive: overcoming the false dichotomy between the "right" and the "center." The two issues to which Bush has devoted the most time since winning the primaries are free-market reform of Social Security and missile defense. Both are conservative priorities, and both are bolder policies than previous Republican presidential candidates have advocated. Bush's speech on the working poor, another part of what Democrats mock as his "Bob Jones Redemption Tour," included a call to lift all restrictions on medical savings accounts. If this is centrism, let's have more of it.

It is true, of course, that Bush has taken some positions less pleasing to conservatives. But these have generally fallen in two categories: unimportant issues (mandatory trigger locks for handguns, subsidies for community health centers) and issues on which congressional Republicans have already capitulated (the Department of Education, racial preferences, HMO regulation). Bush has been reliably conservative on the issues that matter. His support for tax cuts and Social Security reform is more important than his spending initiatives—not least because if he succeeds on taxes and Social Security, it will be easier to limit government in the future. In recent weeks, Bush has also taken up the cause of changing the budget process in ways that will make conservative policies easier to enact. If under Bush's father conservatives got the rhetoric and liberals got the policies, under this Bush the reverse may be true.

Meanwhile, Gore is stumbling. He has not consolidated the base of his party: Bill Bradley was scoring double digits in the primaries long after he dropped out of the race, and Ralph Nader is actually registering in the polls. Gore has had to abandon the hysterically negative tone he adopted after the primaries, if only so that when he unloads again in the fall, the public won't tune him out.

Gore's latent strengths will make him a formidable candidate in the fall. (Don't forget that he was off-balance before the primaries, too.) Nor has Bush's campaign been perfect: For one thing, it is letting Gore and his liberal allies paint an unflattering picture of Texas. Bush would be mistaken to sit on his lead, or to take conservative voters for granted. But the campaign, for now, is going pretty well.

CULTURE WATCH

A Few Good Men

IF we feel a certain unease as Father's Day comes, look at our pols. Although the two leading presidential candidates are both men in their 50s with children of their own, they are fixed in the popular mind as sons (Gore is a Jr., W. avoids it only by virtue of his middle name). As for the man they seek to replace, what paternal qualities can be attributed to him?

Our puzzlement shows in areas beyond politics. Nostalgia surrounds the dying World War II generation because baby boomers believe that some quality of paternal strength is being lost. Yet, if the World War II generation had done its job right, would the boomers feel so bereft by mere death, which is inevitable?

Fatherhood is hard because whatever biological programming men have is wispy. Birth is a nine-month process, conception is instantaneous. Without DNA tests, men can't be entirely sure who their true children are. The traditional solution to these anxieties is patriarchy: the unquestioning assertion of masculine power. Patriarchy in many cultures comes accompanied by harems, and slaves. Wherever it appears, it exacts the obedience of children, sons and daughters alike, so long as the patriarch lives. Yet to many people of faith, to say nothing of republicans, that model can seem blasphemous.

To us, the father must also know when to step aside, so that his sons can become fathers in their own right. The problem of republican leadership is one of the most delicate in public life. When George Washington, Father of his Country, addressed his soldiers, the salutation he used was, "My brave fellows." This is not the only way to motivate men: Mustafa Kemal (later Ataturk) insulted his soldiers at the battle of Gallipoli, to make them charge. Frederick the Great asked, "Do you dogs want to live forever?" By saying, "My brave *fellows*," Washington was asking his troops to follow him, because they were like him. Often, at the moment he asked, they weren't like him; they were raw teenagers on the point of panic. But he asked them to show what they could do.

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OBITUARY

Robert P. Casey, R.I.P.

In 1990, James Carville, who was running Robert P. Casey's campaign for reelection as governor of Pennsylvania, pleaded with him to modify his position on abortion. Carville bluntly told him that if he did not give in on the question of permitting abortion in cases of rape and incest he would lose the election. "If that's true," the governor replied, "then I'll just have to accept defeat." Casey hated losing. But the prospect of winning with the blood of abortion's tiny victims on his hands was worse. As it happened, Casey stood firm, and won by more than a million votes, carrying 66 of the state's 67 counties.

As Casey saw it, elementary justice demands that all human beings, without regard to age, size, stage of development, or condition of dependency, be accorded the equal protection of the laws. Like slavery, abortion is a civil-rights issue. "By embracing abortion," he said, "the Democratic party is abandoning the principle that made it great: its basic commitment to protecting the weakest and most vulnerable members of the human family."

The pro-abortion mentality that had taken root in the elite sector of American culture and in his party was, he declared, a manifestation of the "Cult of the Imperial Self." Casey had always been a Roosevelt Democrat, morally and culturally conservative, but in favor of governmental solutions to social and economic problems. He loathed the elements of economic libertarianism that reflect a social-Darwinist view of human relations. "This," he insisted, "is how the Cult of the Imperial Self manifests itself in Republican circles."

But by 1992, Casey was isolated in his own party. Though a two-term governor of the nation's fifth largest state, he was denied the opportunity to speak at the Democratic convention. Casey was a realist. He knew that politics could not, by itself, accomplish the cultural renewal necessary to restore a vision of the common good that includes respect for human life. But he believed that political action is an indispensable ingredient in the struggle.

Working with Jeff Bell and Frank Cannon, longtime Republican activists, Casey contemplated a primary challenge to Bill Clinton in 1996. Then tragedy struck: The governor's health went into a sharp decline. To save his life, a rare heart and liver transplant would be required. The presidential candidacy was shelved. By late 1994, however, Casey had made a miraculous recovery. His brush with death only strengthened his resolve to fight for the unborn. He wanted to try running again in 2000. Bell and Cannon were to head the campaign, John DiIulio and I to develop its policies.

Casey began to think that some of the ends he sought did not require governmental bureaucracies. He became interested in neoconservative ideas, particularly the thought of Irving Kristol. He realized that much in neoconservatism harmonizes with the tradition of Catholic social thought—particularly its emphasis on the idea of "subsidiarity." But the 2000 campaign, too, would have to fold. He simply lacked the stamina to run.

Gov. Casey continued to speak out for the pro-life cause and to work to promote adoption. He helped elect his eldest son Bobby to statewide office, and enjoyed spending time with his beloved wife Ellen and their large clan of children and grandchildren. As Casey's aide John Wauck once said, "They are the G-rated version of the Kennedys."

With the governor's death, the pro-life movement has lost a champion, the Democratic party its conscience, and American politics a model of principled statesmanship.

—Robert P. George

OBITUARY

William E. Simon, R.I.P.

It was over a year ago that the word went around that Bill Simon was ill, but months went by and he was seen apparently exuding his old energies, which were prodigious. Sometime after he left Washington, where he had served as Secretary of the Treasury for Presidents Nixon and Ford, he called and asked if I would sponsor him for membership in the New York Yacht Club. I'd have sponsored him for membership in Olympus, if he had requested it, and I had any leverage in the situation. Who would you suggest for a seconder? I asked. Well, what about Bus Mosbacher? I dropped the great helmsman a note. He called back: He would be proud and delighted to second the nomination of Bill Simon, but he was disqualified from doing so, because he was serving as the Commodore of the New York Yacht Club. I called Simon and asked who else he might suggest. Why not Malcolm Forbes? I called—nothing would please him more. Forthwith he sent a letter of copious praise for Simon, but it was addressed to the New York Racquet Club.

It all got sorted out, and one afternoon we cruised about town and met the admissions-committee members. One of them asked what was his interest in boating. He said he had sailed a great deal as a boy. Meanwhile, pending the deliberations of the yacht club, he had commissioned a 146-foot sloop. "If I could have found an American builder who would come in within a quarter-million dollars of the Italian builder's price, I'd have said, 'Okay, go ahead'"; but he didn't succeed, and the *Freedom* was built in Viareggio. I recommended to him the New Zealander who had served as captain on three of my transoceanic sails. Allan Jouning was captain of the *Freedom*. Bill Simon sailed it exhaustively, enjoying especially diving, which he would do off Australia, after which he would settle down to examine a half-mile of faxes, reporting on his myriad interests.

They were, foremost, his concern for God and country. He deliberated service for President-elect Ronald Reagan, but Reagan wanted to do his own thing, and Bill Simon at that point wasn't disposed to play second fiddle on the economic scene, not even to the President. He resumed his activities as an investor, and actively superintended the philanthropic work of the Olin Foundation, which has served for 20 years as

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a lifeline to high-minded conservative activity, in the academy and on the public scene (*Firing Line* received critical help from Olin). His interest in sports brought him to the rescue of the U.S. Olympic Committee, and he supervised the triumphant Los Angeles Olympics, rescuing the enterprise from the brooding bankruptcy it had been coping with.

Mostly, his private concerns were for his God, and His commandments. I traveled with him once to Lourdes, a daughter and two sons aboard, and there can't have been four closer friends anywhere than Bill and his children. His philanthropy was staggering, but it was never formalistic. He believed in helping afflicted people not merely by dispatching material help, but by cleaning their bedpans. He loved laughter and good company and his country and his faith, and loved even that converted tug with the elevator inside which he built to replace the sailboat. "It has a range of fourteen thousand miles," he told me proudly. I suppressed the impulse to ask why he would need to go fourteen thousand miles before putting in somewhere for fuel, but that kind of thing expressed the reach of his imagination, his determination to excel, and to reach out as far as he could, which he has now done.

The editors of NATIONAL REVIEW join in expressing our sympathy to family and country.

—WFB

■ NOTES & ASIDES ■

■ Dear Mr. Buckley: A suggestion for a column: an idea whose time has *come—taxing the entertainment* industry.

For every murder shown on screen, the studio will be taxed a percentage of the gross. And this can be expanded to an F-word surtax as well. This isn't censorship, it's just taxation.

There's no doubt that the steady stream of murders and F-words in movies and on TV has coarsened American life. But then, things may be too far gone at this point, and such an idea could probably never get off the ground.

Sincerely,
Robert Tonucci
Goodfellow AFB, Tex.

Dear Mr. Tonucci: A tremendous idea! Congratulations! The revenue of *The Sopranos* would be negative, never mind the murders. Will suggest this to the IRS.

Cordially, WFB

■ Dear Mr. Buckley: Have you noticed an increasing use of the word "paradigm" in NR and other intellectual journals? It is so prevalent that I have begun to anticipate it in every article.

*Do writers tend to latch on to cer*tain words that have a nice intellectual ring? What we may have here is a paradigmatic epidemic.

Yours truly,
Douglas Griffin
Birmingham, Ala.

Dear Mr. Griffin: No, no, you couldn't have a "paradigmatic epidemic." *That misuse would never appear in* NR.

Cordially, WFB

■ Dear Mr. Buckley: Recently in this space, you stated that "Shakespeare wrote Shakespeare's plays." Not so.

When the works were first printed (individually), the space on the title pages where the author's name usually appeared was left blank. Later, the words "by William Shake-Speare" would appear. Obviously, the hyphenation indicated a pseudonym, and it had little resemblance to the Stratford man's surname of "Shaksper."

Conventional wisdom has it that William Shake-Speare was Edward de Vere, 17th Earl of Oxford, and not the illiterate William Shaksper.

Otiosely,
John Cusick
Sun City West, Ariz.

Dear Mr. Cusick: I have no objection to your hypothesis, but it is not correct that conventional wisdom is on your side in the matter. To begin with, conventional wisdom never heard of Edward de Vere.

Cordially, WFB

■ Dear Mr. Buckley: Since you are the ultimate arbiter concerning the correct use of the English language, both my son Kieran and I look to you to referee a dispute concerning the adjective "ubiquitous."

The dictionary defines it as "seeming to be everywhere at once . . . *omnipresent.*" *My son takes excep*tion when I say it basically means to "cover everything."

To avoid open warfare, I turn to you for the final answer and trust this note "covers everything."

Respectfully,
Jack Daly
Stony Point, N.Y.

Dear Mr. Daly: Your son is correct. It is quite intolerable, is it not, when sons are correct in family disputes?

My recommendation: Disown him.

Cordially, WFB

■ Dear Mr. Buckley: *In your column,* "Unscrambling Pinochet," reprinted in NR, you fail to address the diplomatic immunity under which the general was traveling.

Do you wish to do away with this protocol, or merely ignore it?

Best,
Henry Schoner
Balboa Island, Calif.

Dear Mr. Schoner: You make exactly the point NR made, as also I, in another column.

It was dastardly at once to give General Pinochet a diplomatic visa and then proceed to detain him.

Cordially,

—WFB

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■ CAMPAIGN 2000 ■

Slow and Steady

But will it win W. the race?

RICHARD LOWRY

Philadelphia

THE book on George W. Bush is that he ran as a centrist until he lost in New Hampshire, dashed to the right to beat John McCain in South Carolina, then retreated back to the center once he cinched the GOP nomination. Which is funny, because to the untrained eye—and even to the trained one—Bush on the stump appears almost exactly the same as he did six months ago.

At a fundraiser here with about 100 sharply dressed GOP donors, W. stands beside veep contender Tom Ridge, wispy in comparison to the stocky Pennsylvania governor, who looks as if he could have been forged from a perfectly square piece of granite. Bush shrugs and nods, smiling, as he takes the podium in his aw-shucks way and launches into his well-worn stump speech.

W. repeats his usual riff about his wonderful wife: "You can tell the nature of a man by the company he keeps." He recycles his usual lines about wanting "the American dream to touch every willing heart," giving some of the $4 trillion surplus "to the people who pay the bills," vowing as president "to keep the peace," and on and on, up to and including his final pledge to "uphold the honor and dignity of the office to which you have elected me, so help me God."

To be sure, the symbolism of the Bush campaign has shifted—from Bob Jones University to the barrios—and the slogans have mutated from "Compassionate Conservative," to "Reformer with Results," to something in between. (For his reform speech in Philadelphia, Bush's podium is emblazoned with the phrase, "A New Approach," which is lame and—in a departure for the Bushies—not even alliterative.) But it is hard to track Bush's movements on a simple right-to-center grid because he is

By Roman Genn

trying, with some success, to forge a post-Gingrich, post-Clinton politics that defies such lazy categorization.

At the same time Bush has supposedly moved to the center, he has staked his campaign on a partial privatization of Social Security, an old right-wing chestnut. Why isn't this a move to the *right*? He wants to trash the ABM Treaty—a position dear to Jesse Helms's heart—but also to destroy U.S. missiles unilaterally. Is this shifting right or left? He talks all the time about bipartisanship—sounding like GOP moderates—but uses this rhetoric to bludgeon Clinton and Gore. Again, right or left?

Since the primaries, the Bush campaign has been playing a version of the Dick Morris gambit that worked so well for Clinton: offering small-scale proposals that aren't so important as policy but that make symbolic statements about a candidate's character. Clinton's 1996 school-uniform/V-chip blitz was meant both to show that his party, purged of McGovernite excesses, shared the values of the middle class, and to inoculate him against personal scandal. The Democrats, then, could be trusted to expand government again.

Similarly, Bush's barrage of housing credits and literacy programs and community health centers is designed to show that he understands the worries of the middle class, and is free of Newt Gingrich's alleged flights of antigovernment fancy. Bush is no extremist; he can be *trusted*. So maybe it's safe to let Republicans limit—or at least reshape—government again.

Character is the campaign's subterranean issue, and Bush is leveraging it to build a rationale for his election—even during a time of peace and prosperity—in a way that his father in 1992 and Bob Dole in 1996 never did. At the moment, one reason Gore isn't getting traction on issues is that people don't like him or trust him. Meanwhile, Bush's biggest policy proposals have become ways of reinforcing the idea that he possesses that most important of all political character traits: leadership. (Polls consistently show that voters think Bush is a better leader than Gore.)

In this, Bush is stealing a page from John McCain. McCain's advocacy of campaign-finance reform was important mainly because it marked him as a leader willing to buck his party. Gore made the mistake of trying to duplicate McCain's success by aping his positions, thus appearing opportunistic. Bush, in contrast, has found his own version of campaign finance in Social Security reform and tax cuts, positions that are notionally risky or unpopular. So far, Gore's attacks have served mostly to demonstrate how gutsy Bush is to have taken these positions in the first place.

Which is the clincher. Bush's complaint that Washington is locked in a "war-room mentality" sets up a dynamic in which Gore underscores W.'s criticisms with every partisan attack. The thrust of Bush's campaign is that the country may be fine, but Washington is broken—because of the Clinton scan-

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dals, because it's out of touch, because the two parties are trapped in an old politics that keeps them from adopting creative solutions to problems such as entitlements and arms control.

So, what Bush offers is bipartisan comity, more individual choice (through Social Security accounts, school vouchers, tax cuts, etc.), and new thinking for old problems. This sometimes sounds like "beyond left and right" mush, but at bottom it is an anti-Clinton message, and may well represent the most effective way of selling conservative politics since Gingrich caught the populist wave of 1994.

Whatever is buoying Bush's campaign, it certainly isn't his power on the stump. Just because he has been delivering essentially the same speech for months doesn't mean he has gotten any better at it. He constantly steps on his applause lines, making his events more or less clapping-free zones. Then, there is always the risk of verbal tangles. After Bush's remarks at a fundraiser here, one reporter swears the candidate decried "folls and pocus groups"—sending one and all scurrying to their tape recorders only to learn that W. has gotten the phrase out properly.

But if Bush isn't fluid on the stump, he does leave an impression of earnest good intentions. His voice rises as he plods through denunciations of "toll booths to the middle class," and he points this way and that as he vaguely describes social-promotion policies that "say, 'If you're this age, you're here, if you're this age, you're over here!'" So it is on the campaign plane, where Bush doesn't wow reporters with brilliant repartee, but smiles his way through regular rounds of relaxed good-naturedness. "They'll remember that one for a *long time*," he jokes after his hopelessly dry governmental-reform speech.

Sometimes it all seems a little unbelievable: A guy regarded by most reporters with a mild contempt has built an impressive political machine that has him leading the race to be the next President of the United States. The biggest question really is Bush himself: Is he up to defending his positions against Gore's assault in the fall? For W., it's the right time, and he has most of the right themes. What remains to be seen is whether he's the right man. **NR**

■ CAMPAIGN 2000 II ■

Against the Intolerable

How to fight on partial-birth

RAMESH PONNURU

In the debate over abortion, lofty abstractions such as "choice" have a way of blinding us to the concrete reality of what is being chosen. So let's pause to consider what partial-birth abortion, the subject of the current dispute, is. The modifier refers to the fact that the baby is partially delivered when the abortionist penetrates her skull and sucks her brains out. British newspapers have called it a "scissors abortion"; abortionists prefer to call it a "D&X" ("dilation and extraction") abortion.

By any name, it is an enormity. And in its name, the Supreme Court is poised to commit a constitutional enormity. If it does, it will present Republican politicians with a challenge. The burden of leadership will fall especially heavily on George W. Bush. Will he rise to the occasion?

The Supreme Court looks likely to accept the reasoning of the federal judges who have already struck down 21 state bans on partial-birth abortion. That reasoning is a variation on the line that the abortion lobby has taken all along: that there is no such thing as partial-birth abortion. The judges have held that the laws against it are too vague, and that these laws could prohibit other types of abortion that feature dismemberment and vacuuming. That would place an "undue burden" on the right to abortion, which the Supreme Court says is impermissible.

This is nonsense. Partial-birth abortion is a procedure distinct enough to be taught in a medical textbook. And the judges are caught in a contradiction: They say (contrary to the American Medical Association) that partial-birth abortion is sometimes the safest method of abortion. Judge Michael Luttig, one of the few to uphold the ban, points out that if partial-birth abortion can be distinctly superior to other abortions, it must be distinct. Besides, a judge would normally wait to see if a law that could be abused were in fact being applied in an unconstitutional manner. The courts, intent on striking down restrictions on abortion, have not bothered to explain why that rule should be suspended in this case.

The Supreme Court will probably strike down Nebraska's ban on partial-birth abortion (this is the test case), but appear to leave open the possibility that a suitably precise and well-written ban could pass muster. This, however, is an illusion. Legal reasoning is largely irrelevant to the outcome: If the justices want to strike down a restriction on abortion, they will find a way.

It will not be the first time the Court has offered a compromise that turned out to be phony. The "undue burden" test was announced in *Planned Parenthood* v. *Casey*, a 1992 decision that was hailed at the time as "a middle-ground approach" to abortion (the *Washington Post*). The Court was said to be upholding legal abortion, but with reasonable restrictions—a policy in line with public opinion.

If a majority of the Court insists on keeping partial-birth abortion legal, however, it will be ruling out any serious restrictions. Partial-birth abortion will be legal—no matter how many Americans find it horrifying; no matter how many states would like to ban it, as 30 have tried to do; no matter how many pro-choicers, such as Daniel Patrick Moynihan and Dick Gephardt, agree that it goes too far.

The Court will also be exposing the hollowness of claims that it is leading a revival of federalism. The Court may occasionally rebuke Congress when it encroaches on territory that properly belongs to the states. But it reserves the right to encroach on that territory itself. Worse, the Court reserves the right to make policy more or less independent of the Constitution.

One of the most ominous features of *Casey* was that the Court did not even try to ground its decision in the Constitution. The plurality opinion, indeed, reaffirmed *Roe* v. *Wade* while making it

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pretty clear that it was wrongly decided. Moreover, the main reason given for this persistence in error was not the usual concern for the stability of law. It was that admitting a mistake would diminish respect for the Court.

Casey, then, is the moment when the liberal jurisprudential project finally slips its constitutional tether. For that reason, the opinion was rather anxiously insistent that the Court's edict be accepted by the public. It was time, the Court said, for "the contending sides of a national controversy to end their national division." The Court claimed to "speak before all others" for our constitutional ideals: "If the Court's legitimacy should be undermined . . . so would the country be in its very ability to see itself through its constitutional ideals."

■

It's self-government, not just abortion, that is at stake, and someone has to speak up for it, as well as for the unborn.

■

When the Court hands down its decision on partial-birth, politicians will be expected to say something about abortion. The anti-abortion movement will debate what its next legislative move should be: Should it return to the (fruitless) quest for a constitutional amendment? Or take Amherst professor Hadley Arkes's advice and ask for legal protection at least for those babies who accidentally survive abortions?

But it's self-government, not just abortion, that is at stake, and someone has to speak up for it, as well as for the unborn. It has happened before. Abraham Lincoln was appalled by the outrageous usurpation of democratic authority by the Supreme Court in *Dred Scott*. The Constitution, he understood, is not the same thing as the Supreme Court's case law. When he became president, and was faced with a conflict between the Constitution and that infamous decision, he chose to obey the authority to which he had sworn an oath.

A Congress moved by such an understanding of its duty would resist the Court. It could, for instance, use its power under Article III, Section 2, of the Constitution—which allows Congress to make "exceptions" to the Court's appellate jurisdiction—to declare, by a simple majority vote, that partial-birth abortion is out of the Court's purview. But this approach is still too controversial, even among conservatives, to succeed; the groundwork has not been laid.

In today's politics, only a president or a presidential candidate has the stature to resist the Court. The political pressures on George W. Bush will be considerable. He will want to suggest to anti-abortionists that they should work to put him in the White House to overturn this result. But if his reaction is tepid, they may be demoralized instead: After all, some Republican appointees will be complicit in the Court's decision. And Bush cannot promise to appoint only justices who would vote correctly: He has repeatedly said he would have no such "litmus test." Furthermore, the Court is held in high regard by the public. If Bush were to point out its radicalism in harsh terms, he himself would end up looking radical.

The temptation for Bush will be to temporize. He could say that he disagrees with the Court's ruling and that the justices he most admires—Antonin Scalia and Clarence Thomas—voted to uphold the ban. But, he could add, the Court has spoken, and its decision must be respected. He could move into the Court's wiggle room and say that he looks forward to the day when the Court will uphold some other law against partial-birth abortion.

There is a bolder alternative: to turn the language of the pro-abortion Left back against it. The abortion lobby is always saying that we must not "impose" our views on others. But the Supreme Court, Bush could point out, is engaged precisely in imposing its preferred policy on the people—in overriding their democratic choice to draw the line at infanticide. In his opposition to the Court, Bush would be both morally staunch and populist.

And it may be a blessing that Bush cannot go too deeply into the question of appointments. By instead sticking to the grounds of his objection to the Court's decision, he can vindicate the principle that a president's main constitutional role should not be that of judge-picker.

Bush can keep it simple: Infanticide is wrong and must be banned; the people have the power to do this; and if the Court rules otherwise, it is wrong. An oblique reference to Lincoln? That wouldn't hurt, either. **NR**

■ **CAMPAIGN 2000 III** ■

A Bore for Gore?

The prospect of Sen. Dick Durbin

STEVE CHAPMAN

He's a fiftysomething career pol with a youthful head of dark hair, a tendency to earnest dullness, a vocal antipathy for the tobacco industry, and a willingness to defend Bill Clinton through thick and thin. Al Gore? No, Dick Durbin.

If you're asking "Dick who?" you're not alone. A longtime fixture on Capitol Hill, the senior senator from Illinois could go unrecognized walking down the street in any city outside his home state—or, come to think of it, in his home state. Among the high-stepping thoroughbreds who make up the Senate, Durbin is a workhorse, known not for flash but for diligence and reliability. He's the logical choice to get the second spot on the Democratic ticket if Gore passes on the more eye-catching prospects in favor of a safer one—and, perhaps, a kindred spirit.

Durbin's most obvious asset is Illinois, a swing state with 22 electoral votes that voted for the losing presidential candidate only twice in the last century. Durbin thrashed a well-funded conservative Republican in the 1996 race to fill the seat vacated by liberal darling Paul Simon, and he ran particularly well among the independent-minded subur-

Mr. Chapman is a columnist for the *Chicago Tribune*.

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ban voters who generally hold the balance of power in the state. As a Catholic midwesterner, he complements Gore without creating the prospect of personality or policy clashes. And as a scandal-free team player who doesn't need a Chevy Suburban to carry around his ego, he has no obvious strikes against him.

Durbin would appeal to a tiny but close-knit ethnic bloc found mostly in Chicago: Thanks to his immigrant mother, he apparently would be the first Lithuanian-American on a national ticket. If he's chosen, the Democrats would combine Tennessee and Illinois at the top of the ballot for the second time in 50 years—Adlai Stevenson and Estes Kefauver did it in 1956. Kefauver got the vice-presidential nomination that year by beating out another Tennessee senator: Albert Gore Sr.

If Durbin has a weakness, it lies in his anonymity and unassuming demeanor. One asset in a vice-presidential nominee is plausibility as president—like Lyndon Johnson in 1960, George Bush in 1980, Al Gore in 1992, or Jack Kemp in 1996. All had run for the top job before. But it's not likely that any of Durbin's Illinois constituents ever thought of him as a future leader of the free world. If Gore is sober and stiff enough to pass for a Secret Service agent, Durbin could be lost in the crowd at a conference of CPAs. Shortish and built for comfort, with looks that are telegenic without being handsome, he's the political equivalent of those Hollywood character actors whose faces are familiar and whose names are unknown. He can fill a role capably without ever threatening to upstage the star. Presidential timber? Not by a long shot. But if there is such a thing as vice-presidential timber, Durbin is it.

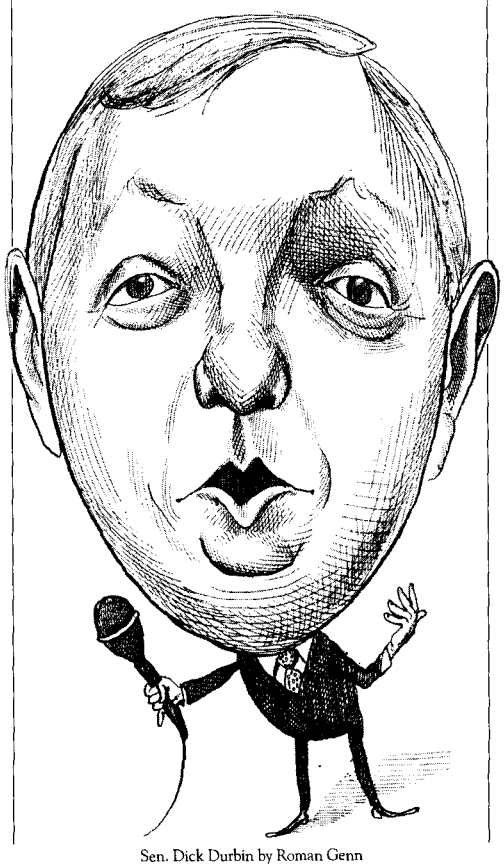
He's made his name (such as it is) on the kind of soccer-mom issues Gore plans to exploit this year, chiefly tobacco and gun control. He counts his anti-tobacco crusade as his proudest achievement, having sponsored the first ban on smoking on domestic airline flights back in 1987, and pushed to make the proposed (and failed) tobacco settlement more punitive. He takes pride that, upon arriving in the upper chamber, he got the Senate to restrict smoking in all public areas—the first restrictions it had ever approved. He has something in common with Gore: a close relation (in Durbin's case, his chain-smoking father) who died of lung cancer. But Durbin isn't known for making shameless political use of his personal loss.

■

Presidential timber? Not by a long shot. But if there is such a thing as vice-presidential timber, Durbin is it.

■

He saves his grandstanding for gun control. By the time the 1996 Senate campaign was over, most voters probably thought his opponent's name was Assault Weapon Salvi, thanks to Durbin ads flogging him for opposing the absurd cosmetic ban enacted in 1994. Among Capitol Hill reporters, Durbin is notorious for holding a press conference or making a floor speech in response to every school shooting. After the attack in Jonesboro, Ark., he rushed to introduce legislation making it a federal offense for parents to store a firearm in such a way as to permit access by a child. Never mind that in Jonesboro, the youthful killers broke open a locked gun cabinet. The measure showed his Clintonesque talent for turning policy placebos into political gold.



Sen. Dick Durbin by Roman Genn

This aptitude comes from spending his entire adult life in politics and government. He got his start in college as an intern for Illinois Democratic senator Paul Douglas, and worked as an aide in the state senate before joining the staff of then-Lieutenant Governor Paul Simon. In 1982, he was elected to the first of seven terms in the U.S. House of Representatives, before ascending to the Senate in 1996.

Along the way, he acquired the ability to appeal to voters who are more conservative than he, which includes most Illinoisans. Salvi ran commercials deriding him as a "big-taxin', big-spendin', pay-grabbin' liberal," but like George Foreman pummeling Muhammad Ali, he found his best punches ineffectual. At the same time, Durbin showed something that doubtless would come in handy against George W. Bush: an ability to attack his opponent as a right-wing extremist without ruffling his own choirboy demeanor. That's one reason the Senate Democratic leadership often deploys him to battle Republican initiatives on the floor.

On issues, Durbin is a bit to the left of Gore, with a special affinity for organized labor. The AFL-CIO gave him a 100 percent rating in 1995 and 1997, only slightly higher than his career average, and he rarely gets into double digits with the American Conservative Union. Unlike his predecessor, Paul Simon, he hasn't challenged party orthodoxy by supporting a balanced-budget amendment to the Constitution. On campaign finance, the minimum wage, racial preferences, and most other issues, he's a generic liberal Democrat and a reliable vote for the White House, with a presidential-support rating in the 90 percent range.

About his only major recent departure from the party line could be seen as an act of loyalty to the White House: After every Illinois Democrat in the House voted against the China trade bill, Durbin endorsed it. "I think my friends in labor are wrong on this issue," he says unabashedly. Cynics may argue that he came out that way only because he wants to be Gore's running mate. But the case can be made that Durbin would be more

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attractive if he had sided with labor, making him a perfect choice for Gore to mend fences with union officials still seething about granting "a blank check for China." In any case, having voted for NAFTA, Durbin doesn't need a clever excuse for supporting this accord.

Despite his ideological distance from NATIONAL REVIEW, Durbin cheerfully submitted to a telephone interview for this article, and he almost managed to say "Bill Buckley has been a personal hero of mine since I was a callow youth" without laughing. Asked what he has to offer conservative voters, he points to his support for the death penalty, his vote for welfare reform ("The welfare system was indefensible"), and his stress on fiscal discipline. This last translates as: No Bush tax cut. Durbin admits that many on the right disagree, but says he'd bet that most NATIONAL REVIEW readers would rather see the first dollar of the federal surplus go to reducing the national debt than provide "a tax cut for the wealthy." If Durbin is serious about this wager, he may find himself voted the liberal Democrat conservatives would most like to play poker with.

They will be less attracted by his record on abortion, which has ranged even more widely than Gore's. Running for reelection to the House in 1985, he supported not only the Hyde amendment but the Human Life Amendment, giving fetuses constitutional protection starting from the moment of conception. Nowadays, by contrast, he votes to require states to fund Medicaid abortions and opposes a ban on partial-birth abortion. (Unlike Gore, however, he doesn't deny that his position has changed.)

Political flexibility, however, is no vice in a vice-presidential candidate, who has to be willing to defer to the needs of his running mate. A faithful partisan and lifelong politician like Durbin should have no problem with that, though he says he dearly hopes he doesn't get the call. What makes him appealing as a possible running mate is the same thing that could sink him: He's safe, boring, sure not to draw attention from Gore, and unlikely to help or hurt the ticket outside his home state. If Gore wants to generate excitement, he'll probably choose someone less conventional. But excitement is not something you normally associate with Al Gore. **NR**

■ COVER STORY ■

The Manly Ideal

Gone, but not forgotten

JOHN O'SULLIVAN

It is commonly said—but I believe it anyway—that boys need fathers in order to grow up into well-adjusted men. It is less commonly said—and equally true—that boys lack proper masculine role models even in homes where the father is present.

Consider the number of men you know who seem to be not wholly adult but stuck in some eternal adolescence symbolized by the wearing of casual clothes at weddings, funerals, and even leveraged buyouts. The average Internet billionaire, for instance, seems to be permanently dressed for the beach. Compare the slight uneasiness you feel about him with the complete confidence you had in your father and even in your father's friends.

If such personal comparisons are too painful (and I am beginning to sweat slightly), consider the leading men in Hollywood movies and compare them with the stars of the '40s and '50s. Whether they were bachelors in romantic comedies or married men in domestic ones, actors like Cary Grant or Spencer Tracy seemed eminently mature. They wore suits, went to offices, drank cocktails, danced fox trots, and solved problems. If they were playing fathers, there was generally a point in the plot where they had to give understanding advice to their teenage daughters. Even more remarkable, they managed to be credible in doing so. It was an adult world they inhabited, and we could all imagine their handling life's difficulties with efficiency and even aplomb.

Can we imagine Brad Pitt or Sean Penn giving us that same confidence? I think not. They seem to live in a world of glorious irresponsibility. Even their pleasures—rock music and discos—seem adolescent. Now, these are merely surface impressions and are probably very unfair to Messrs. Pitt and Penn, who are serious actors and, for all I know, spend their leisure hours engrossed in Schopenhauer. But they represent the Hollywood model for the modern male—a permanent adolescent on a toot.

Adolescent irresponsibility can often be a charming quality. But it wears badly. And it is at war with the formation of a strong responsible character that in men we used to call manliness. We shrink from even using the words "manly" or "manliness" today because the feminist sensibility in polite society regards such terms as sexist. And when manliness is equated with responsibility, as above, the feminist asks with heavy sarcasm: Are not women responsible too?

■

Manliness is the prescription for a social virtue that all men lack in a state of nature.

■

So let me compound the offense: Yes, women are responsible—indeed they are *naturally* responsible. Their vulnerability *to* child-bearing and *in* child-rearing forces responsibility on them, and millennia of Darwinian evolution have stored responsible instincts in their genetic makeup. It is men who have to be trained to responsibility since their evolutionary inheritance encourages them to be promiscuous drones, leaving a succession of ladies in the lurch. (Have I offended enough people yet? If not, carry on reading.)

Our civilization at present has embarked on the experiment of freeing men from a sense of responsibility through such means as no-fault divorce, government support for single mothers, and the removal of stigma from virtually every human activity that is not actually criminal. Among the visible signs of this experiment are the large numbers of middle-aged adolescent males buying coffee and aspirin in supermarkets. And a disturbing pic-

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ture of where we are headed—a world of promiscuous sex divorced from reproduction, collective child-rearing, universal cosmetic surgery, cold-hearted selfish personal relations: in short, a world designed to accommodate universal irresponsibility—is drawn by Aldous Huxley in his prescient pre-war novel *Brave New World*.

We have traditionally persuaded men to embrace the sober virtues by associating responsibility with decent manly behavior. Far from a scientific description of a genetic quality all men share, manliness is in fact the prescription for a social virtue that all men lack in a state of nature. If responsibility is the least natural ingredient in manliness, it is not the only ingredient. Manliness has other components such as courage, duty, and even chivalry that are more obviously related to male genetic qualities such as an excess of testosterone. Here, of course, feminists again step in triumphantly to depict manliness as a socially approved form of aggression, and the Brute as the ultimate manly man, ready to wreak havoc if someone in a bar steps accidentally on his toe.

■

Manliness is not permission for aggressive behavior but a set of rules that inhibit aggression in most cases.

■

In the social history of moral tales, however, manliness is not permission for aggressive behavior but a set of rules that inhibit aggression in most cases while requiring it in others. A genuine manly man does not pick on weaker opponents, employ unfair methods of fighting, or kick a man when he is down. The totalitarian logic that the best time to kick a man is precisely when he is down has to be regarded with distaste by anyone with aspirations to genuine manliness. Indeed, Churchill strongly disapproved of the climax of the 1943 film *The Life and Death of Colonel Blimp* because the chivalrous colonels were defeated in a military exercise by a young officer who seized them before it was scheduled to begin, justifying his action with the argument that "the Nazis don't play by the rules, and neither should we."

Whatever the logic of total war, Churchill saw that this argument, in addition to being fatuous (why not avert defeat in a game of chess by kicking over the board?), subverted something of permanent importance: namely, the tradition that low trickery and unbounded violence are no part of civilized manliness. It is hardly a coincidence that the ideology of "winning at all costs" and the use of the term "loser" to describe the worst of fates have both spread throughout society in tandem with the rise of the permanent adolescent.

Equally, a manly man is expected to use violence to defend himself, to prevent someone from being bullied, or especially to protect a woman. As the Cambridge don John Casey has argued, any man who did not intervene when he saw a woman being struck would feel bitterly ashamed of himself, even if he could justify his actions rationally—for instance, on the grounds that he was outnumbered and would not be able to render her effective assistance. This feeling is the stronger because it is both innate yet also encouraged by social pressures and influences.

Like most schoolboys in Britain until about 1960, I was brought up on a series of tales that were the manly equivalent of counsels of moral perfection. For instance, Captain Oates, when he realized that he and his wound were threatening the survival of his colleagues in Scott's expedition to the South Pole, walked off into the Antarctic night with the simple words: "I am just going outside and may be some time." Who could not admire, and wish to emulate (though not right away), such self-sacrifice?

If we fail to encourage such qualities, we are unlikely to get a New Age Sensitive Man who, in addition to doing his share of the housework, will also give up his place in the lifeboat to allow an elderly woman to survive. Instead, we will find ourselves with two sorts of irresponsible men: the Brute who beats up his girlfriend in the bar and the Sensitive Man who, in outraged response, gives a tax-exempt contribution to his local battered-person's shelter. **NR**

■ COVER STORY II ■

Paternity Fight

Pols and activists argue over dads

KATE O'BEIRNE

THE National Fatherhood Initiative, an advocacy group that promotes responsible fatherhood and the importance of marriage, is running a series of public-service ads about the "nature of fatherhood": Male lions roar to protect their young from predators, penguin dads balance eggs on their feet in subzero temperatures, adult male elephants temper the delinquent behavior of their young bulls. "Just a reminder," conclude the slickly produced spots, "of how important it is for fathers to spend time with their children."

What these arresting, 30-second images from the animal kingdom say about the importance of fathers is driving feminists wild. The notion that children desperately need their dads threatens the feminists' core belief in women's autonomy. That's why NOW denounces the "dangerous policy" of paternal responsibility promoted by the ads. At a time when fatherhood is becoming respectable again—Al Gore recently attended a National Fatherhood Initiative conference, and James Earl Jones and Tiger Woods have appeared in the group's commercials—a battle continues to rage over what exactly fatherhood means.

The most embattled version of fatherhood is the traditional notion that children need dads who are married and living with them. Feminists (and, oddly enough, fathers'-rights groups) are promoting versions of fatherhood that undermine this traditional idea.

The feminists enjoy the notion of the Dispensable Dad, who is good for child-support payments, but not much else. A third of all children are born out of wedlock, and feminists support beefed-

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up government efforts to collect child support from these never-married dads. This financial help advances NOW's destructive goal of making single motherhood more viable. Increasing child support is also a favorite policy of federal and state governments; the hope is that absent fathers will increase their involvement with the offspring who receive their monthly checks.

But this hope is probably unrealistic. About half of single mothers were living with their child's father at the time they gave birth, but by the time the government shows up to try to squeeze child support from him, he is long gone and no longer interested in either mother or child.

One expert, Heritage Foundation welfare guru Robert Rector, holds out little hope for activating absent dads who have never paid child support and no longer have a relationship with their offspring's mother. Further, says Rector, "Collecting child support and encouraging a guy to stop by with a pair of tennis shoes from time to time won't appreciably help children who face all of the negative consequences of growing up in a single-mother household."

The absence of fathers caused by divorce has been the focus of another interest group active in the fatherhood wars—the growing fathers'-rights movement, which seeks to make marital breakups more father-friendly. These aggrieved divorced dads lobby for reforms in divorce laws, such as eliminating custodial preferences in favor of mothers. In an article in the June *American Spectator* sympathetic to the movement, Cathy Young faults "sexism against fathers" for the neglected plight of disenfranchised dads who want to be more involved in their children's lives.

Young rightly criticizes feminists for caricaturing divorced dads as abusive losers whose families are better off without them, but she—like the fathers'-rights movement—then swings too far in the other direction, by placing most of the responsibility for broken homes squarely on women. She points out that the "dirty little secret of the divorce debate is that two-thirds of all divorces involving children are initiated by mothers." She notes that wives often seek the end of a marriage even in the absence of "grave offenses" and concludes that men are less pro-divorce than women. But the fact that a woman is more likely to initiate a divorce tells us only that she is more likely to be unhappy in the marriage, and absolutely nothing about the cause of the unhappiness. Women's higher expectations for marriage no doubt have a lot to do with their unwillingness to be content with a crummy one (though both mothers and fathers should be more willing to put up with the disappointments and demands of marriage).

Regardless of who is most responsible for a divorce, one parent generally wants nothing more to do with the other, so the imposed joint-custody arrangements favored by the fathers'-rights movement are unworkable in most situations.

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More politicians will have to find the courage to extol the importance of married fatherhood.

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The idea of avoiding custody fights entirely—by getting and staying married for the well-being of the children—invites the full wrath of the feminists. NOW is currently promoting an article published last year in *American Psychologist* arguing that "neither mothers nor fathers are unique or essential." In "Deconstructing the Essential Father," two Yeshiva University professors maintain that children are perfectly fine as long as they have "parenting figures" of either sex, who need not be biologically related.

It's the institution of marriage that's being deconstructed by the researchers, who see the call for responsible, married fatherhood as a backlash to the gay-rights and feminist movements. Predictably, they favor policies that support the legitimacy of "diverse family structures." The unique masculine contribution of fathers is not merely dismissed as unimportant; the authors argue that a father's presence in the home may even impose costs, because "some fathers' consumption of family resources in terms of gambling, purchasing alcohol, cigarettes, or other nonessential commodities, actually increase[s] women's workload and stress level." Fathers, in other words, are a burden.

This perspective is mirrored in our political life. In contrast to the relentless efforts by government to collect support from absent fathers, and the energetic lobbying by divorced dads, there have been few policy attempts to strengthen married fatherhood. One such effort, federal legislation that would fund services for absent fathers, but also provide modest support for groups that promote marriage and responsible fatherhood, met with hysterical opposition from NOW; the feminists argued that the legislation would trap women in abusive relationships. Despite the opposition, the House approved the bill—the Fathers Count Act—by an overwhelming margin; a similar bill is pending in the Senate.

Some national politicians find feminist rhetoric irresistible. While Vice President Gore did mention the "M-word" at the National Fatherhood Initiative conference, he felt constrained to appease his feminist friends by stipulating that any group receiving federal money to promote fatherhood must include domestic-violence-prevention programs.

At the state level, one of the principal goals of the 1996 welfare-reform legislation—to discourage illegitimacy and promote marriage—has been largely ignored. Very few governors have been willing to talk about the importance of marriage. (George W. Bush in Texas and Mike Huckabee in Arkansas are notable exceptions.) And only Oklahoma governor Frank Keating has proposed a plan to fund pro-marriage initiatives.

The future of American fatherhood depends on whether we can frankly acknowledge the need to reduce the number of fatherless homes. More politicians will have to find the courage to extol the importance of married fatherhood, or the domesticated species of fathers will be in greater danger of extinction than their furry counterparts in the wild, who never question "how important it is for fathers to spend time with their children." **NR**

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■ THE MIDDLE EAST ■

Death of a Tyrant

Assad and the world he left

DAVID PRYCE-JONES

A WISE man once said that each man's death diminishes us all. He did not have the Middle East in mind. The death of President Hafiz Assad of Syria relieves the world of a tyrant who held power these last 30 years. Widely described, and even admired, as a cool and calculating man, he was thought to hold the key to war and peace in the region. In reality, he made a series of egregious mistakes whose effect has been to marginalize and impoverish Syria. Lively and creative individuals, in a country of potential wealth, Syrians under Assad have instead experienced unremitting oppression. "This too will pass," is an Arab saying that expresses historic helplessness in the face of tyranny. The passing of Assad is a necessary—though, unfortunately, insufficient—step toward progress.

Assad came to power in 1970 through a particularly unscrupulous coup, after which he had his rivals and several colleagues imprisoned or murdered. His sole and abiding purpose was then to maintain and consolidate absolute power for himself. This was not a straightforward issue. Assad was an Alawi, which is to say a member of a Shia sect estimated to form about 12 percent of the population. The huge majority of Syrians are orthodox Sunnis, and they saw no good reason to submit to domination by a minority. Historically, the Sunnis had provided the ruling elite. Now Assad, his family, and favored Alawis divided the spoils between them, enriching and empowering themselves in a process as visible as it was corrupt. Hama is a city of 200,000 inhabitants, and in 1982 the Sunnis rose against the Alawi establishment there. Perhaps as many as 30,000 Sunnis were killed when Assad turned artillery on the city center. Their corpses were then buried under cement, otherwise unmarked to this day.

In almost all countries without democracy, there are irreconcilable disputes between majorities and minorities, and it may be argued that Assad had little or no choice if he was to survive. Leaving aside the inhumanity, the violence of the Hama massacre calls for revenge, in a society where revenge is a matter of honor.

Assad's brutally primitive methods of control had much in common with Communism. After training as an air-force pilot in the Soviet Union, Assad evidently believed that Communism was compatible with his ambitions, suitable for Syria, and destined to win the Cold War. So he made Syria into a Soviet client state, with a centralized economy, a single party, and a secret police to enforce his will regardless of law. Some of his political opponents have spent whole lifetimes in prison without trial. Syria offered such sights as women's labor brigades in khaki fatigues, something wholly alien to a Muslim country.

Reuters/CORBIS

A killer in power

The steadfast friend and ally of Brezhnev and later Andropov, Assad became a true Kremlin conspirator, the recipient of huge secret subsidies and arms deliveries. President Ceausescu, then the Communist leader of Romania, liked to boast that when he needed to have someone murdered in the West, he turned to Rifaat, Assad's brother, to do it. Assad also sponsored international terrorists such as Abu Nidal and Carlos Sanchez, the so-called Jackal, and Abdullah Ocalan, the Kurdish advocate of violence against Turkey.

Whether Assad really believed his regular denunciations that Israel is a wicked imperialist state that ought to be wiped off the map is doubtful. In all likelihood, he was too complete a cynic. Conflict with Israel promoted Assad to a role of importance on the world's stage. Here was a threat that he could brandish either to suit the Soviets in the Cold War or for advantage in the Arab world. In that spirit, he collaborated with President Anwar Sadat of Egypt in launching the surprise war of 1973. In the last decade, calibrating the degree of violence with the precision of a chemist, he exploited the Israeli security zone in Lebanon to keep up regional tension.

At the same time, he was sending agents for overt or covert subversion and sabotage into Jordan and Iraq, closing the common frontiers whenever that seemed expedient. He sponsored violence against Turkey, threatening to mobilize until the Turks made unmistakably clear their own intention to invade Syria. Since 1976, some 35,000 Syrian troops have occupied Lebanon and dictated that country's external and internal affairs. Probably the Palestinians have had no greater enemy than Assad, whose regular outbursts of rage against Yasser Arafat were notorious. Once he even had him detained. In short, not one of Syria's neighbors escaped Assad's attempts at aggrandizement.

Allegiance to the Soviets carried the certain expectation of reward, and also served to tantalize the United States with the prospect that he might switch if offered even greater rewards. In the 1991 Gulf War, he joined the Allied coalition in return for a couple of billion dollars that he promptly spent on Soviet Scud missiles and chemical weapons. But by then this game of playing off the superpowers was coming to a close. One fine day, Gorbachev dismissed Syria without apology. Assad had misunderstood the balance of forces in the world; or more simply, backed the wrong horse. Misplaced flattery from the Clinton administration encouraged Assad until the end of his life to persist in the illusion that he could embark on a peace process whereby Israel would make a

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complete surrender without any meaningful compromise on his part.

The death of a dictator is invariably a flashpoint in his society. Assad sought to establish his elder son Basil as his heir. A playboy by nature, almost certain to have evolved into a gangster pure and simple, Basil was killed in a car crash. Assad then turned to his second son, Bashar, aged 34, an optician with some education in the West, and by all accounts a modest man unlikely to be a budding gangster. Billboards everywhere in Syria carry his portrait, and the state-controlled media extol him as the natural successor to power.

Some years ago, his uncle Rifaat was estimated by *Time* magazine to have a fortune of over $100 million, extracted by criminal methods and enough to buy an obedient militia. In the past, he plotted a coup against Hafiz, his own brother, and was sent into exile for it. Even if Bashar and Rifaat settle their differences, there are half a dozen Alawi generals and police chiefs to challenge them both.

The Sunnis are the unknown quantity. Potential leaders, some of them extreme Muslim fundamentalists, have long fled abroad in fear of their lives. No procedure exists for anyone to come to power constitutionally, and nobody knows if there is some personality among the Sunnis capable of mounting a coup and dispossessing the ruling Alawis. Now is also the moment for Muslim fundamentalists and victims of Hama to seek their long-awaited revenge.

Like all countries that were in the Communist orbit, Syria today is a post-Soviet slum in urgent need of reform. Someone has to transform it into a modern state, by privatizing the economy, releasing the energies of its people, and introducing law and justice. A strange political novelty in itself, hereditary dictatorship under Bashar Assad may not be the appropriate instrument for such great change, and another tyrant may seize power instead. In which case, Sunnis and Alawis will likely settle their differences in the grim old way, in bloodshed or civil war. In which case, too, the stalemate with Israel and the other neighbors will persist, and Syria is doomed to remain marginalized and impoverished. **NR**

■ **EDUCATION** ■

Where We Stand

The conservative end of education

HARVEY MANSFIELD

EDUCATION policies are not enough. What we say we want them for matters too, and matters more. Conservatives have not been saying enough about the content of education.

To see what I mean, listen first to the opposition. On a radio ad in Massachusetts, the National Education Association makes a pitch for reducing class size. You hear a noisy hubbub when the class has 24 kids; but when the number falls to 15, there's nothing but quiet—productive quiet, you are led to suppose. The ad ends: "If you want to improve education, ask a teacher."

So, the woes of our education have nothing to do with the teachers! On the contrary, teachers will tell us what we must do. What we need is smaller classes, which, it is not said, will require more teachers. Quite a few more—60 percent more, if the example given is generalized with the aid of some elementary algebra. The result will be more quiet, or better discipline, in classrooms.

The teachers' union asks us to believe that it wants order in classrooms, that fewer children in them will do the trick, and that this is all we need, or the first thing we need, to improve education. It's easy to guess that the unstated means to more decorum—more teachers—is really the end that the NEA has in view.

Yet to do the union credit, one also suspects that it has a more serious end in mind. It wants not only more jobs for its members, but also a certain kind of education for our children, the kind its members, or its activists, believe in. The end they desire is an equalized citizenry averse to risk, competition, and conflict, in which each person is simultaneously wrapped up in himself and compassionate to others.

Conservatives need to oppose this degeneration of our democracy. We need to get beyond the banality of the self-comforting self and the superficiality of a compassion that always ends in a government program. We need to expose the deliberate leveling of our people by the liberals who are in charge of our education. The best way to do that is to be explicit about the conservative end of education.

At present, conservatives advocate school policies such as more discipline, learning by rote, going back to the basics, teaching right and wrong, and making teachers accountable. They promote changes such as vouchers and charter schools designed to liberate our schools from unions and liberal bureaucrats. These are reforms worth fighting for, but it is tempting to invest too much in them by treating them as ends in themselves.

Conservatives should keep their eyes on the end beyond: the content of our education. We get a glimpse of this end in the general concern over falling standards in education. Though many deplore the obvious relaxation that comes with easy grading, only conservatives raise it as an issue. Here above all we witness the amazing decline in our time of liberalism as a philosophy of education. When I was younger, my father (a professor) and my teachers were liberals, but they knew, unlike liberals today, that true education is exacting. They took it for granted that a good teacher is above all a demanding one. Even today, the teachers we remember are not the easygoing, ever-smiling, all-tolerating ones, but the taskmasters and the hard graders.

What is so special about high standards? High standards make you excel, and to excel you have to look up to something above yourself as you are now. You have to aspire to something. The gravest fault of our education today is that its content gives us nothing to aspire to. Conservatives need to

Mr. Mansfield is professor of government at Harvard University. His new translation of Tocqueville's *Democracy in America*, done with his wife, Delba Winthrop, will appear in August.

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say that the end of our education is to make democratic citizens with minds—or why not say souls?—that can love, admire, respect something or someone above themselves. This end has to be spoken or asserted because it is not beside us, tangible, ready-to-hand. It is above us, and invisible.

From this elevated outlook we can look down on the impoverishment of today's education, based as it is on self-esteem. Our liberals' notion of self-esteem derives from a distinction between self and other—abstract terms for me and you. The distinction is then overcome by mutual recognition when the self sees itself in the other—or you and I decide we are not so different as we first believed. Abstractness is as close as liberals get to profundity, but the effect is merely to level people out to their common denominator. I recall that when I was in high school, the worst thing you could be called is "stuck up." The liberal notion of self-esteem is nothing but that juvenile attitude dressed up as philosophy. It says that you can be known as a nice guy if you drop your pretensions—the pretensions that arise from aspirations, from the determination to look up.

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The word 'great' comes easily to Americans. But there is little of greatness in the content of our education now.

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The conservative end of education is certainly to make democratic citizens, not aristocrats. Democratic citizens are loyal to democracy and capable of maintaining or advancing it. The content of our education should include both loyalty and capability, because both are necessary and neither element guarantees the other. We want a great people that is sustained by great individuals. The word "great" comes easily to Americans; it is our common aspiration to be a great people. But there is little of greatness in the content of our education now.

This need not be. The worst of the liberals' education is visible now in their promotion of multiculturalism and environmentalism. Multiculturalism tries to show that when you look at the apparent diversity of peoples they turn out underneath to be all the same. The moral lesson of multiculturalism is a lazy, cynical relativism of "nothing matters." All rulers are oppressors except the ones we like. But multiculturalism can be saved if it is improved—in courses of world history that focus on the excellence of each nation and its contribution to progress. Here is genuine pluralism without flatness, unafraid to pass judgment and eager to teach respect.

Similarly, environmentalism need not be the exercise in moralism and self-hatred it is now. We can teach our children to look up to the beauty and sublimity of nature. We can also show them that nature poses a challenge to man: We must struggle to survive against nature; we want to improve on nature; we yearn for immortality beyond nature. These are subjects for the discoveries of science and the high themes of literature.

In the course of thinking over the content of our education, conservatives might educate themselves. Why do we call certain human beings great? Why are they heroes? Of course they had great capacities, but they were heroes because they looked up to something greater, more perfect than themselves—an ideal. Conservatives must capture idealism from the liberals. We look up to those who look up. A man is never more manly, nor a woman more womanly, than in devotion to something greater than the self. Today, heroes are reduced to role models, and heroism is leveled to make it more attainable. But a hero is to be admired. He is beyond you and your precious self, just as a hero is devoted to something beyond *himself*.

Our education needs to return to simple right and wrong, that is true. Not all moral questions are complex, and it is time to call a halt to the liberal sophistication which consists in making excuses. Still, some moral questions are complex and require thoughtful deliberation. Why did the American founders compromise with slavery, and why did Abraham Lincoln move so cautiously against it? Here is an example with which to introduce our students, at the appropriate age, to moral complexity, to the need for reflection, and to the puzzles of human life. Idealism charges up the hill, but moral reflection looks carefully and calculates. We need both, but they are not easy to combine.

A word on religion, since many will assume that when I speak of looking up I mean to God. Well, probably, but not necessarily. Our country is so constituted that it needs religion but cannot rightly adopt a religion. The conservative end of education must respect this difficult fact, and we must hope that God understands it as we do. Maybe this sounds irreverent, but education is not a perfectly solemn affair. Right now, I feel myself to be in the ridiculous position of having delivered a commencement address that nobody invited me to give. **NR**

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■ POLITICS & CULTURE ■

X Marked the Spot

Farewell to generational nonsense

JONAH GOLDBERG

RECENTLY, Paul Farhi of the *Washington Post* wrote a brilliantly subtle profile of the pundit Heather Nauert. "Who the heck is Heather Nauert?" Farhi asked rhetorically. Before the article, the answer from most people in Washington—er, most men—was, "Isn't she that hot-as-tar blonde on Fox News?" Farhi fleshed out the characterization somewhat, but it turns out that's still the right answer. Nauert, 30, frequently appears on television as a "GOP strategist," even though she's never worked for the GOP—largely because she's an adequate talker and quickens the pulse of male couch potatoes. "From the time I was 16," she says, "I knew I wanted to do something on TV"; lo and behold, she's managed to become an expert on elections, foreign affairs, and tax policy (after a brief stint as a country-music VJ).

While one might be expected to take this story as an example of how fierce competition is forcing networks to lower their journalistic standards (and let's not pick on Fox on this score; after all, MSNBC's anchors are increasingly underwear models with if-I-only-had-a-brain glasses), one could also see the Nauert story as a sign of a major positive step for our culture: the death of "Generation X."

Not too long ago, the press was committed to the idea that people born between, roughly, 1961 and 1980 were bona fide members of the identity-politics coalition. This idea was based on a sort of secular astrology, the notion that the experience and perspective of young people was so different, so unique—simply by virtue of their date of birth—that members of other generations could never fully appreciate it.

Now, where would people get an idea like that? More important, who on earth could believe such nonsense?

Well, if you guessed "the baby boomers," you'd be right on both counts. Boomers are the "ugly Americans" of civil society. For more than 30 years, they've tromped through every corner of our culture, rearranging things and demanding that people speak their language. When they were under 30, they insisted that anyone older than 30 couldn't be trusted. Once they passed 30, they whined that everyone younger than that was apathetic and unreliable.

When people say "baby boomer," of course, they don't mean all people born from 1946 to 1964. They mean a certain type of liberal—usually coastal, prosperous, suburban, and white; the kind of people who pay fealty to their youthful ideals by demanding no-smoking signs at the Barnes & Noble.

These same suburban Hillary Clinton voters who "swear" they were at Woodstock also insist that there was once a generational consensus about American politics. But both claims are false revisionism. In the late 1960s, probably the most pro-military demographic group was youth, especially those boomers who had not attended college. When the voting age was lowered from 21 to 18, the predicted hordes of progressive young people did not materialize to carry George McGovern to victory in 1972. Half of the 18-to-20 age group stayed home, and the other half split about down the middle (52 percent McGovern, 48 percent Nixon). As David Frum has argued, much of what we call the 1960s is really baby-boomer shorthand for the way they wish they had been.

Fast-forward to the 1990s. The first big wave of post-boomers was entering the work force—specifically, elite newsrooms. The prospering boomers hated them. A headline in the *Washington Post* blared, "The Boring Twenties: Grow Up, Crybabies." Then there was all that drivel about "slackers" and Generation X. Boomers, according to *U.S. News*,

Mr. Goldberg is editor of National Review Online (www.nationalreview.com).

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thought of twentysomethings as "flesh-and-blood Bart Simpsons. . . . With their MTV-rotted minds and sound-bite attention spans, they are a whiny cohort with the moral compass of street-gang Bloods and Crips, a bunch of apathetic slackers who don't vote and couldn't care less."

Then came the backlash. Young writers and pols of widely varying levels of talent and good faith whined that boomers were being unfair. The language they used was awfully similar in tone and content to the hypersensitivity we are accustomed to hearing from more prominent members of the coalition of the oppressed. Douglas Rushkoff, editor of *The GenX Reader*, complained that *Newsweek*'s assault on Gen Xers smacked of "condescending, humorless insensitivity." Another Gen X writer, Ian Williams, whined that Gen Xers feel a "distinct and undeniable alienation from the culture" and that boomers just don't get it.

Op-ed pieces, letters to the editor, and magazine articles poured forth from Gen Xers, most of them terribly written and even more poorly conceived. But that mattered little. Gen Xers figured out how to push every button in the baby-boomer psyche. They claimed to be a demographic group with a distinctive identity; they invoked the legacy of the 1960s, reminding boomers of the vast chasm that supposedly divided people on either side of 30. Most claimed that liberal goals were the goals of the "youth movement." Indeed, they built an argument on the foundational assumptions of modern liberalism, and wrapped it with a nostalgic appeal to boomer vanity.

And it worked. Madison Avenue *loved* the concept of Gen X, because it gave them a hook to go after younger consumers. Hollywood didn't need to be persuaded to leap on the twentysomething craze, considering their insatiable desire to appear profound while casting young and attractive people. Lazy journalists, marketers, and pollsters all used "Gen X" as shorthand.

But a vast amount of the theorizing was still hooey. The late social scientist Everett Carll Ladd, writing about Generation X, observed that social commentary "has many shortcomings, but few of its chapters are as persistently wrong-headed as those on the generations and generational change. This literature abounds with hyperbole and unsubstantiated leaps from available data."

Regardless, the boomer media elite was sold on the idea, largely because many Vichyite twentysomethings were eager to tell the baby-boomer regime what it wanted to hear. Groups like "Lead or Leave" and "Third Millennium," and TV shows like MTV's ludicrous "Choose or Lose," suddenly appeared, dedicated to the proposition that young people in America speak with one voice—and that these paper tigers were that voice. Some groups tackled serious issues; Third Millennium, for example, dealt responsibly with Social Security. But the idea that these groups had broad support from their "constituency" is a fantasy.

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Gen Xers figured out how to push every button in the baby-boomer psyche.

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Indeed, many of these activist "youth" groups are simply the youth auxiliary for monster interest groups. Look, for example, at the "coalition"—People For the American Way, Friends of the Earth—supporting the generally benign voter-turnout group, Youth Vote 2000, and you quickly see that youth politics is generally a synonym for conventional liberal activism.

The rise of multiple cable-news channels only exacerbated the Gen X fad. All of a sudden, the weak thinking behind generational analysis married the lowest-common-denominator values of news producers trying to fill thousands of hours of nothingness with attractive young people eager to be on TV at any cost. The result was a flood of "Gen X" correspondents, and programs aimed at an audience that wasn't watching, and for good reason. "The visual trope of my hair certifies me as an outsider," one Gen X pundit, Omar Wasow, told the *New York Times*.

Worse, conservatives—who should be above the temptations of identity politics—started to play the game too. Frank Luntz and a coterie, mostly female, of twenty- (and, *shhhhh*, thirty-) somethings bragged of their knowledge of Smashing Pumpkins songs and preened over their ability to use the word "progressive" without snickering. After the 1994 election, all over Washington young conservative hipsters of both sexes reveled in their ability to smoke cigars and do the macarena. It bears repeating that conservatism is supposed to respect ancient wisdom, and eternal, *universal* truths. As political scientist Diana Schaub has written, the Gen X formulation, "Guess you had to be there," denies our "common humanity and the possibility of reasoned discourse."

Many of the professional Gen Xers were legitimately talented, and they have outlasted the fad. For example, Jonathan Karl of CNN was originally a "Gen X correspondent," but he transcended that silliness because he's a good political reporter. (His eagerness to move away from the Gen X beat is revealing.) Some, like Meredith Bagby, CNNfn's Gen X correspondent, still cling to the fiction of Gen X distinctiveness. And others have disappeared because they didn't have anything to offer but their professional youngness. For example, Debbie Matenopoulos was the Gen X representative on ABC's *The View*. She was dropped when it became clear that she didn't have the intellectual candlepower to toast bread, never mind hold her own with her colleagues on that daytime brain trust.

Which brings us back to poor Heather Nauert (who says her ideal job would involve "something combining politics and smart stuff"). In the *Washington Post* profile, she quite bluntly tried to play her generational ace: "It's more interesting to see a young person talking about issues than a big old fat white guy." This is undoubtedly true if you've hit the mute button; but Nauert is, by most accounts, pretty bright, so she knows that that's not true when the sound is on. She has announced that she's going to the Columbia School of Journalism this fall, because she needs a "stronger foundation to stay in the business and build a career out of it."

Now that's the voice, not of a "generation," but of reason. **NR**

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A 1998 GAO report says money isn't the only motive. "Vigilante justice" is another factor.[1]

Put yourself in the cop's shoes. It's tough to legally find evidence of a drug deal between a willing buyer and seller. To make it stick you're going to have to lie about it on the witness stand. Everybody knows you're lying — the prosecutor, the judge, the bailiff — but nobody complains because that's how you get the job done.

But no matter how many drug dealers you bust, they are instantly replaced. No matter how many tons of drugs you seize, the flow never stops. No matter how much dirty money you confiscate, it keeps bubbling up out of the sewers.

So maybe the tenth time or the twentieth time you hand over a suitcase full of cash to the evidence locker, it dawns on you that this is Mission Impossible. Why not get in on the action and kick a little butt while you're at it.

All across the country — all across the world — the drug war is giving us organized police crime on a frightening scale. It's undermining our criminal justice system and our civil rights.

We can do something about this.

Mike Gray, Chairman Common Sense for Drug Policy
For more information visit: www.csdp.org.
703-354-9050, 703-354-5695 (fax), info@csdp.org

[1]Source: Government Accounting Office; Report to the Honorable Charles B. Rangel, House of Representatives, Law Enforcement: Information on Drug-Related Police Corruption, Washington, DC: USGPO (1998 May).

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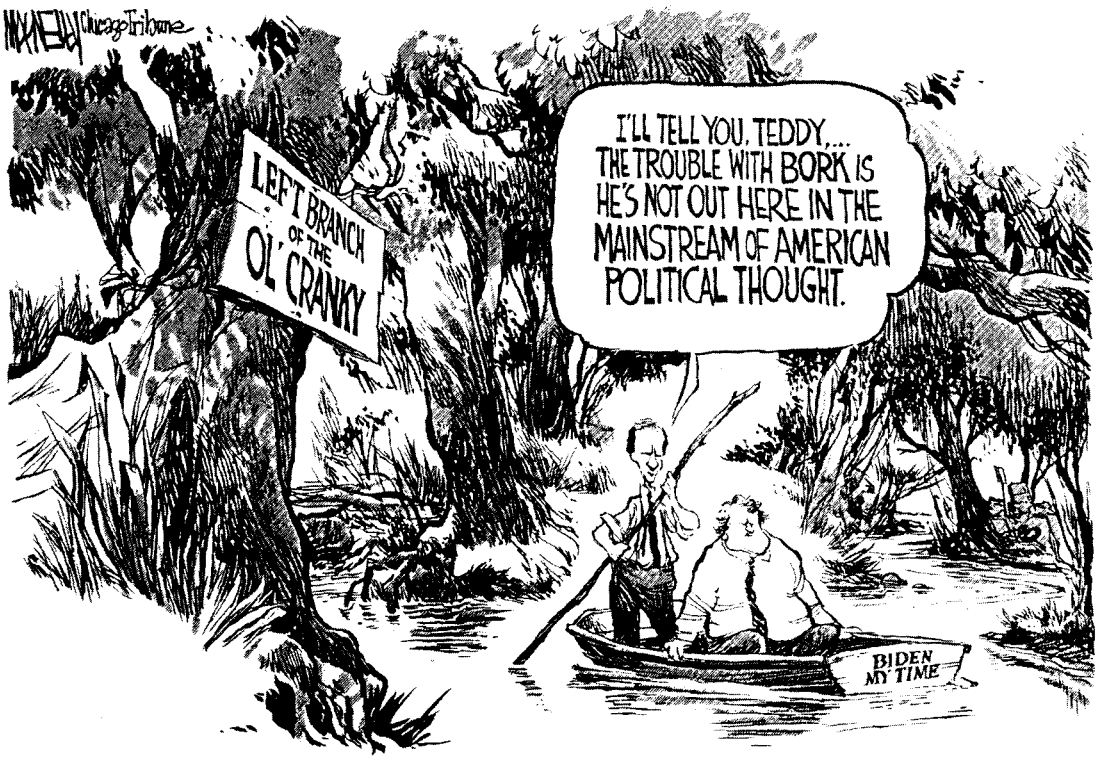
HELP!!!!

Jeff MacNelly offered himself to NR as a cartoonist when he was a young man, and we turned him down. Dumb us. When he became the best cartoonist in the nation, in practically no time, he forgot our bad taste and did some covers for us, even as his syndicated cartoons became the mainstay of "Help!" To pick, from the jewel box of Jeff MacNelly's output, the choicest items is onerous: There is only that good one, and that other good one, and that other good one over there. Yet connoisseurs may prefer his work in the Carter years. The White House metamorphosed into a pineywoods general store, with a sagging porch and a lopey old dog and a pickup on blocks in the tall grass. Jimmy Carter, owner and proprietor, shrank physically as the weeks went by. No one damaged Carter more—except Carter himself, which is why MacNelly's barbs (never vicious, only malicious) hit home. His death, at 52, leaves us with less reason to smile.

1980

1987


Chicago Tribune
LEFT BRANCH OF THE OL' CRANKY
I'LL TELL YOU, TEDDY,... THE TROUBLE WITH BORK IS HE'S NOT OUT HERE IN THE MAINSTREAM OF AMERICAN POLITICAL THOUGHT.
BIDEN MY TIME

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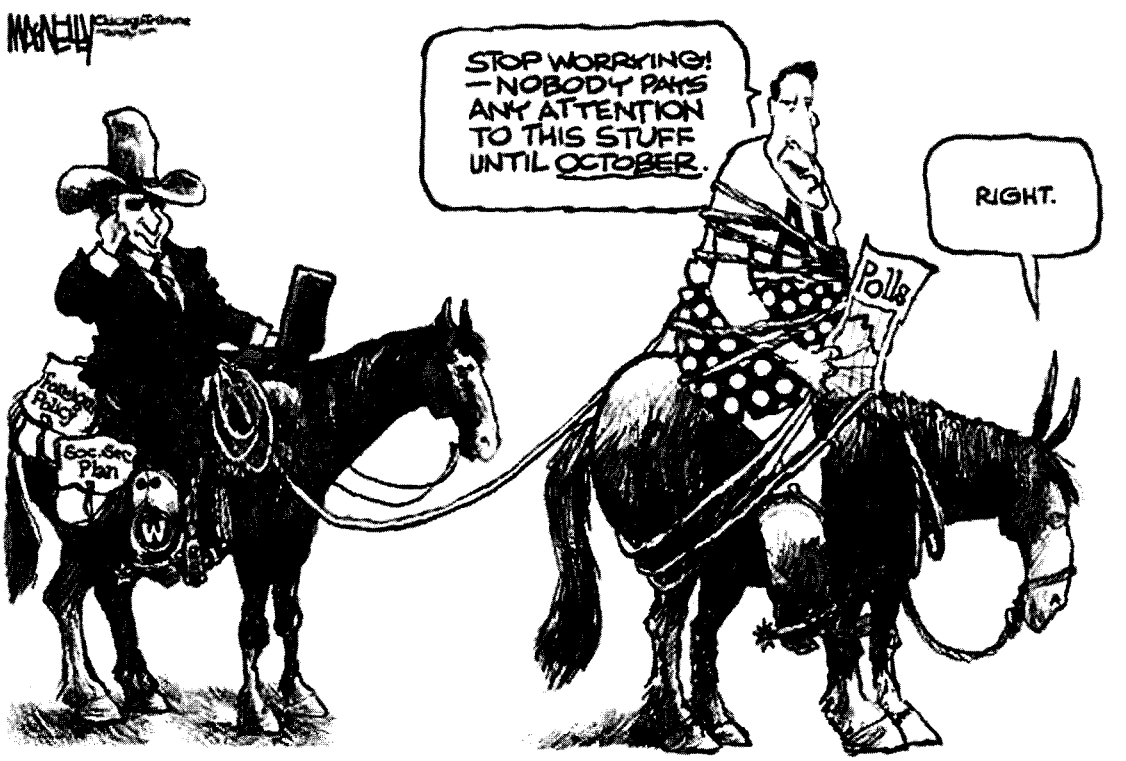
1998

2000



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The Attack Man

Bob Shrum and the Democratic style

JAY NORDLINGER

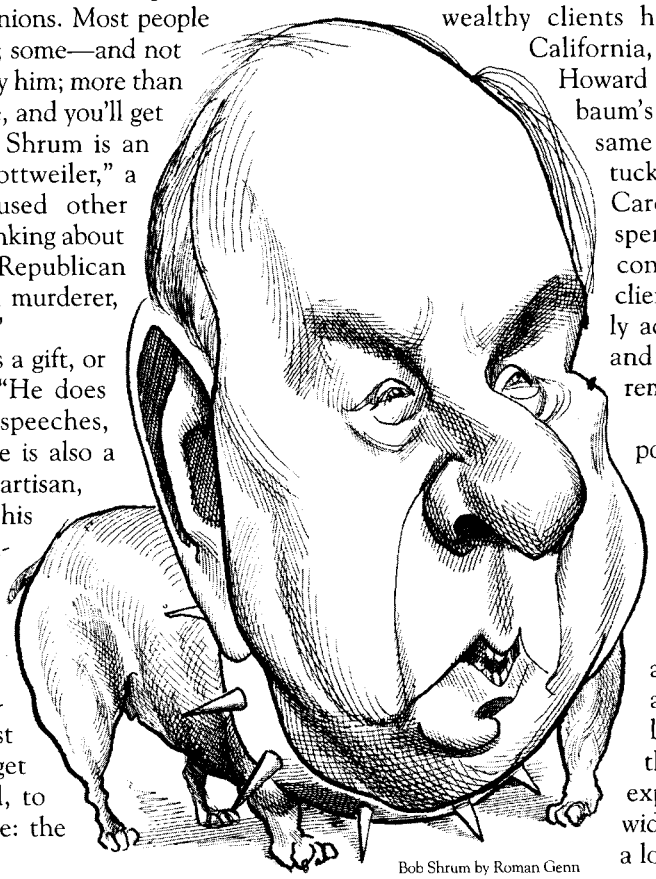
AL GORE, as the country now realizes, is a rough campaigner—even a nasty one. His rhetoric is extreme, and his tactics are brutish. Naturally, he has formed a campaign team in his own image. There's general chairman Tony Coelho, who made his reputation smashing the face of Ronald Reagan in the 1980s. There's campaign manager Donna Brazile, who pops off wildly, sometimes shooting herself in the foot. And then there's Bob Shrum, the media strategist and all-purpose guru, who is the most aggressive, the most slashing, the most ruthless of them all. The campaign of George W. Bush knows to buckle its seat belt: It's going to be a very bumpy ride.

Shrum is probably the most important Democratic operative of the last 20 years. He has been at just about everyone's side, in the thick of nearly every fight. He is a legend in his own time: Everyone in politics, Democrat or Republican, has a fund of Shrum stories, and opinions. Most people like him; some are in awe of him; some—and not only Republicans—are repulsed by him; more than a few fear him. Bring up his name, and you'll get an earful of canine metaphors: Shrum is an "attack dog," a "pit bull," a "Rottweiler," a "junkyard dog." Some have used other images, however. Years ago, in thinking about Shrum's work, the New Jersey Republican Tom Kean said, "You hire an ax murderer, you're going to get an ax murder."

No one doubts that Shrum has a gift, or many gifts. As one rival says, "He does things seamlessly." He writes speeches, crafts ads, and plots strategy. He is also a fluent, if sometimes comically partisan, talking head on television. For his clients—particularly Ted Kennedy—he has written some of the most lapidary, most soaring Democratic oratory of our time. And yet no one is more adept at the low blow, at kicking Republican teeth in, especially in the last days of a campaign, when the target is too stunned, or too battered, to respond. Shrum is a curious type: the poet-goon.

On top of all this, he is a first-rate businessman—perhaps the most successful political consultant in Washington. Shrum, to put it mildly, is rich as Croesus. And he got that way, first by being capable, and second by connecting with politicians who are themselves rich. The deeper a candidate's pockets, the more likely Shrum is to be in them. As one observer puts it, Shrum is a master at "fleecing saps from the hinterland who don't know how to run a media campaign." Says another, "He goes for rich and stupid. They just don't know what has happened to them." Shrum's former firm, Doak & Shrum, was known by some as "Soak and Run." Quips one of Shrum's fellow operatives, "Bob has convinced political neophytes to play the game of 'Who Wants to Be a Former Millionaire?'"

Currently, Shrum is handling Jon Corzine, the Senate candidate and ex-Goldman Sachs partner in New Jersey. Other wealthy clients have included Al Checchi in California, Herb Kohl in Wisconsin, Howard Metzenbaum in Ohio, Metzenbaum's son-in-law, Joel Hyatt, in the same state, Charlie Owen in Kentucky, and John Edwards in North Carolina—all loaded, all free-spenders. Of course, every other consultant would like the rich clients, too, as Shrum's peers happily admit. It's just that the smooth and clever Shrum has shown a remarkable ability to land them.



Bob Shrum by Roman Genn

In the course of his prodigious politicking, Shrum has become a fixture on the Washington social scene. Indeed, he is a pillar of it. He and his wife, the writer Marylouise Oates, are part of that cozy community that features Al and Judy, Jim and Kate, and (not least) Ben and Sally. Says an insider, "Bob likes money, no doubt about that. He has an extravagant and expensive lifestyle." Shrum is a wide-ranging reader, a bon vivant, a lover of Italy. And he runs a star-

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ry Georgetown salon. Says one wistful Washington figure, no longer invited, "I always enjoyed him." The Shrum home "was the gathering place in Washington of all the thinkers on the Democratic side, with a few Republicans sprinkled in. I met everybody there. You go there for the amazing food and the incredible conversation. And when you leave, you feel like you just dined at the Smithsonian. Frankly, I miss it."

RISE OF A PRO

Shrum, now in his mid 50s, grew up in Los Angeles. He won a scholarship to Georgetown University, where he was named the top college debater in the country (no less). Then he went to Harvard Law School, where he earned still more honors. He never practiced law, however, jumping into the political arena immediately. He wrote speeches for John Lindsay, then for Ed Muskie in the 1972 presidential campaign, and after that for the party's nominee, George McGovern. Four years later, he signed on with Jimmy Carter—whom he left after a grand total of ten days. In quitting the campaign, Shrum accused Carter of duplicity, of saying one thing in public and another in private. He also implied that Carter was something of a closet conservative. Jody Powell, the press secretary, said that Shrum had acted in a "childish and hurtful manner." As Carter himself told it, the young scribe had assumed "that he could just deliver me a speech and I would parrot it." Well, "I've never done that."

Next time around, in 1980, Shrum was a Kennedy man, trying to bump off President Carter in the primaries. Kennedy fell short, but Shrum wrote the famous "dream shall never die" speech that the senator delivered at the Democratic convention. Among political liberals, this is holy writ.

For the next four years, Shrum served as Kennedy's press secretary. He is probably responsible for the term "Star Wars" to describe missile defense—one of the most devastating political coinages of this age. After President Reagan gave his historic speech proposing missile defense in March 1983, Kennedy, on the floor of the Senate, denounced "the misleading Red Scare tactics and reckless 'Star Wars' schemes of the president." Ah, the tenor of the times! The term "Star Wars," associated as it was with a president who had been a movie actor, stuck. Who can know how much it has done to slow the progress of missile defense? Al Gore, when he is feeling especially sniffy, uses the term to this day.

Though he left Kennedy's office in 1984, Shrum has never stopped writing for the senator. Apparently, he has drafted all of Kennedy's important utterances of the past two decades, including the quasi-apology in 1991 for lapses in personal behavior, and the eulogies for Jackie Onassis and John Kennedy Jr. Shrum does some extra-political ghosting, too: He provides material for such extravaganzas as the Emmy Awards and the Kennedy Center Honors. Shrum is in constant demand, and his customers are usually satisfied.

As a full-time political consultant, he quickly racked up an impressive client list: Alan Cranston, Barbara Mikulski (with whom his wife has written novels), Tom Bradley, Geraldine Ferraro, David Dinkins. In the 1988 presidential race, Shrum's horse was Dick Gephardt, who ran a relentlessly negative campaign, with a strong populist, and protectionist, bent. You will perhaps recall the $48,000 Hyundai, set against a Chrysler K-car that was supposed to cost the equivalent amount in Japan. So ferocious were Gephardt's tactics against Michael Dukakis that a major Gephardt supporter, Claude Pepper, complained, and apologized to the Dukakis campaign.

In 1990, Shrum had one of his most notorious years, busting heads in a way that shocked even Democrats across the nation. In Florida, he handled Rep. Bill Nelson in the primary for governor against Lawton Chiles, a veteran, gentle, well-loved pol. Shrum blitzed Chiles with a series of ads that portrayed him as old, out of touch, and maybe a bit nuts (Chiles had admitted being treated for depression). The ads also accused Chiles of securing sweetheart loans for himself and his son. The state of Florida recoiled—and Chiles won handily.

Over in Texas, Shrum worked for state attorney general Jim Mattox in the gubernatorial primary against Ann Richards, the state treasurer. Richards had acknowledged a struggle with drink, but she had refused to address whether she had indulged in other substances as well. So, Shrum went on the air with an ad that said, "Did she use marijuana, or something worse, like cocaine . . . not as a college kid, but as a 47-year-old elected official sworn to uphold the law?" The reaction to this sally was furious. The *Boston Globe*, a liberal and exceedingly Shrum-friendly paper, registered its disgust. Richards's adviser, Bob Squier (since deceased), declared that Shrum's ad was "the most despicable spot I have ever seen in politics." Roger Ailes, the Republican impresario who two years before had made the Massachusetts murderer Willie Horton world-famous, was quoted as saying, "Honest, whatever you think of me, I wouldn't do that."

When it was presidential time again—1992—Shrum hooked up with Bob Kerrey, the war-hero senator from Nebraska. Seldom does a political adman have a juicier product to sell. But in the New Hampshire primary, Shrum chose to portray Kerrey as a Gephardtian, Japan-bashing protectionist. The strategy flopped. Later, out West, Shrum did an ad attacking the front-runner as an environmental menace: "Under Bill Clinton, Arkansas dumped more toxic waste into rivers and lakes per capita than any other industrial state."

When Clinton won the nomination, however, he did not turn his back on Shrum's talents. Shrum helped him write his convention speech, and would go on to draft President Clinton's State of the Union addresses. Moreover, he wrote the semi-famous Speech That Was Never Given, intended for Clinton to deliver in August 1998, after his grand-jury testimony in the Lewinsky affair. The brief address was contrite, measured, and graceful. Evidently, the president wanted no part of it, instead letting loose an angry, defiant blast at his enemies. Clinton paid the price in public opinion.

It was in 1998 that Shrum hit the jackpot with Al Checchi, the billionaire in California. Checchi spent about $40 million in a losing effort to grab the nomination for governor. Several of those million—no one is quite sure how many—went to Shrum. Somewhat awkwardly, you would think, Shrum went up against a former client of his, Rep.

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Jane Harman (also a billionaire, as it happens). His ads tagged her as an enemy of the poor and elderly for her votes to contain Social Security and health-care costs; as a partner in crime of the hated Newt Gingrich; as a "career politician." They were—even by Shrumian standards—"grossly misleading," in the words of a prominent Democrat in the state, Sen. Dianne Feinstein. Said Feinstein, "It's one thing to have a lot of money and use it to tell people what you're for. It's another thing to have a lot of money and use it to falsely depict, to mislead and destroy." In the end, a third candidate—Gray Davis—won the nomination, going on to Sacramento.

There's worse. A lot worse. The 1998 gubernatorial election in Maryland pitted the Republican Ellen Sauerbrey against the Democrat Parris Glendening. The race was neck and neck until the final days of the campaign, when Glendening and Shrum played the race card. Really, that is understating it: They lit that card and proceeded to torch the landscape. As a state legislator, Sauerbrey had voted against minority set-asides and a "hate crimes" bill. She had also opposed a measure—deviously labeled a "civil-rights act"—that had to do with sexual-harassment suits, and that was ultimately quashed by the Democratic state senate. Reaching his lowest, Shrum unleashed an ad that smeared Sauerbrey as a racist, with a "shameful record on civil rights." (Just to be sure, he also blanketed black communities with a flier that did the same.)

■

The voice of Democratic politics is, in essence, the voice of Bob Shrum. It has his tone, his language, his thrust.

■

A good portion of the state was aghast. Several black Democrats, including Baltimore mayor Kurt Schmoke, rose to Sauerbrey's defense. Schmoke told the press pointedly that he knew the "difference between a political conservative and a racist." He made clear that he did not regard the Shrum spot as "truth-in-advertising." Schmoke refused to make an ad for Glendening that faulted Sauerbrey on civil-rights grounds. Even *The New Republic* balked, editorializing against the "dishonorable" practice of "race-baiting." It also noted that a "short-run gain to the governor may come at some cost to the racial atmosphere in his state."

The ad, however, worked its terrible magic. It apparently frightened black Marylanders, boosting their turnout and putting Glendening over the top. According to *Campaigns & Elections* magazine, this was the "Most Brutally Effective Attack Spot" of the year.

Today, Ellen Sauerbrey warns that the Bush campaign had better be prepared for more of the same. Shrum, she says, "has no scruples about distorting the record to try to scare African-American voters. This is a nasty man, without a conscience, who will drag someone through the mud and use the most divisive political issues he can think of." Look, she continues: "If you attack people on something like their environmental record, after the election, you haven't done any lasting harm. But when you divide and polarize communities on the basis of race, I think it has long-term and very nasty effects."

THE TONGUE THAT BURNS

The voice of Democratic politics is, in essence, the voice of Bob Shrum. It has his tone, his language, his thrust. Listen to him back in 1988, explaining how the Democratic presidential nominee ought to talk. Little has changed. "The candidate," he said, "should tie the Republicans to the far Right and paint them as anti-environmental. Both tactics have worked well for the Democrats in recent elections. The Republicans now have a party that is in thrall to the far Right. Theirs is no longer the party of Abraham Lincoln and Theodore Roosevelt. It has become the party of Jesse Helms, Pat Robertson, and James Watt." (That last, to be sure, is an anachronistic note. Today, Shrum would substitute . . . Bob Jones.)

Yet there is a part of Shrum's 1988 schtick that would not work well for the Democrats in 2000. Hard as it is to believe now, Democrats such as Shrum once pretended that the Reagan administration was a carnival of corruption. Twelve years ago, Shrum asked, "What has happened to public values? I envision an administration where no presidential appointee ever takes the Fifth Amendment, and no special prosecutor has to be appointed, because no special favors have been granted, and no secret, illegal plans have been concocted. . . . The standard this administration has set has infected everything. We now have a public ethic on Wall Street that says, Whatever you can get away with is right. There must be a higher standard than that—and that standard must be set in the highest councils of government."

We should hardly expect to hear this from Bill Clinton's vice president this year.

In assailing the Republicans, Shrum can be piercing, but also a little silly. He mentions Herbert Hoover a lot. Five years ago, he said, "One reason we have millions of hungry children is [that Republicans] sponsored a whole bunch of people and put them in power who thought ketchup was a vegetable." Most hilariously, he said last year that George W. Bush "threatens to reinstall the supply-side economics that brought his father's administration down." Shrum, who knows a thing or two, must be aware that President Bush was a determined foe of supply-side economics, whose devotees despised his administration.

Most of Shrum's circle swears that he is a true believer, a (Ted) Kennedyite to the core, a bleeding heart. A few describe him as a democratic socialist, and as a political Catholic in the mold of Dorothy Day. Indeed, Shrum pointed out in 1998 that "the Pope has constantly emphasized" that the "great duty of Western societies now, through the public sector, is to create a fairer society in terms of issues like health care, child care, and a whole range of services." Yet Shrum is vigorously pro-choice on abortion. He runs tough abortion ads against pro-lifers, and also against pro-choicers who are deemed less than rock-solid on the issue. He did this to Rudy Giuliani, for example, while working for David Dinkins.

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There is a second school of thought about Shrum—one that holds that he is less of a bleeding heart than meets the eye, that says that, if his heart bleeds anything, it is not so much Kennedy red as high-dollar green. It is certainly true that there is an element of the pure professional in Shrum. In 1988, for instance, he made ads for California senatorial nominee Leo McCarthy, a committed foe of offshore drilling. At the same time, he also made ads for Occidental Petroleum, which was trying to retain the right to drill offshore. Or consider this: In late 1997, Shrum wrote a speech for Dick Gephardt decrying the course of the Democratic party as too pragmatic. Less than two weeks later, Ted Kennedy rebutted this criticism—in a speech also written by the flexible Shrum.

Says one Shrum critic, "His ideology? Come on: His ideology is to make money, go to Italy, have parties, and be a big deal."

Always, though—always, always—there is the toxic issue of race. Shrum, as the quintessential modern Democrat, rides it for all it is worth. Recently, his colleague Donna Brazile attacked Republicans as racists, who "would rather take pictures with black children than feed them." Said Shrum, "The fact of the matter is that what Donna said is true." And Shrum was there in California, in 1996, doing his worst to defeat Proposition 209, the ballot initiative that sought to ban race and gender preferences in that state's public institutions. When he finished an ad, the anti-209 camp rejoiced that he had "designed a nuclear bomb." The ad was classic Shrum: David Duke, burning crosses, the whole nine yards. The message, too, was classic Shrum: Preferences of this type could be opposed only by the Ku Klux Klan. The night riders were coming.

Ward Connerly, who spearheaded 209 (which eventually prevailed), writes of Shrum in his new book, *Creating Equal*. He met the Democratic maestro before a taping of *Firing Line*. "Sitting in the green room," remembers Connerly, "I asked him about the ad. 'We didn't have much money,' he shrugged, 'and had to get the biggest bang we could for the buck.' As he spoke, his voice and manner conveyed a quintessence of nihilism, and I had the image in my mind of Saddam Hussein mindlessly lobbing Scuds at Tel Aviv long after it was clear that he had lost the Gulf War."

We are told incessantly that "politics ain't beanbag"; that "if you can't stand the heat, stay out of the kitchen"; that the political racket is "not for the fainthearted," etc. Anyone who questions the Shrum way of conducting politics is apt to be dismissed as a romantic or a naïf. Surely, though, we should resist the notion that there can be no decency—no honesty, no fairness—in our politics. For many years now, Shrum has been a vial of poison in those politics. He is the undisputed master at, as the old cliché goes, "playing to people's fears." And how a liberal Democrat—considering what liberal Democrats once were—can make a living by rubbing racial tensions raw is a mystery.

Not a mystery is what Shrum and his partners will do to George W. Bush, especially if Al Gore is trailing as Election Day nears. There is only one consolation: Even as he scorches the earth, Bob Shrum doesn't always win. **NR**

Fire in a Fake

Frances FitzGerald and her 'Star Wars' myths

JOHN J. MILLER

SAY this much for Frances FitzGerald: She has great timing. She began her book about Ronald Reagan and the Strategic Defense Initiative in 1990. What an unpromising chore it must have seemed! The Cold War was ending, and missile-defense plans were already struggling; Clinton-administration cutbacks were about to make the challenge doubly difficult. Also, missile defense is a highly technical subject, one that's tempting to leave entirely to the guys in the white lab coats; FitzGerald, a journalist with a degree in history, had no particular knowledge of rocket science. Her editors must have wondered whether the book would have any relevance at all when it was finally completed.

Yet FitzGerald persisted, for nine years. Missile defense mesmerized her, and so did Reagan. "The achievements of his administration seemed elusive to many," she writes in the book. She wanted to know: "What other President, after all, could persuade the country of something that did not, and could not for the foreseeable future, exist?" Antiballistic-missile defense, she said, "was beyond the reach of technology." But it marked "Reagan's greatest triumph as an actor-storyteller." He fooled so many, so well.

FitzGerald has now produced what Arthur M. Schlesinger Jr. calls "a brilliantly perceptive and illuminating portrait of Ronald Reagan." With incredible timing: Just as missile defense has started to make news in a way it hasn't since the 1980s, Simon & Schuster has published FitzGerald's book, *Way Out There in the Blue: Reagan, Star Wars, and the End of the Cold War*. The critics adore it, and the catchy blurbs for the paperback edition are probably being typeset at this moment. Her story is "oddly gripping" and "clearly, eloquently, and engagingly" told, purred Alan Brinkley in the *New York Times*; it's "devastating," admired Lars-Erik Nelson in *The New York Review of Books*. "Endowed with enough drama, irony, and political perception to match its importance," marveled *Kirkus Reviews*. "This well-written book . . . even has chortlesome footnotes," raved Ruth Walker in the *Christian Science Monitor*. (Chortlesome? Alas, not everything can be "well-written.")

If only all of this were true. Reagan and SDI have long deserved a close examination of the sort they receive from FitzGerald, but *Way Out There in the Blue* is a tendentious work. Sadly, it now stands as the closest thing there is to an official record of Reagan's SDI program. Historians who aren't yet born will turn their attention to Reagan, and it is this book—for want of any real competition—that threatens

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to mold their thinking on some of the most significant political conflicts of the 1980s.

The warm reception given to *Way Out There in the Blue* comes as no surprise. Frances FitzGerald has been a liberal star for 30 years. She has an impeccable blue-blood pedigree, descending from Boston's Peabody clan. One great-grandfather founded Groton, and a great-grandmother helped start Radcliffe College. The historian Francis Parkman, too, is an ancestor. Her father was Desmond FitzGerald, a deputy director of the CIA during its swashbuckling days. Her mother was Marietta Tree, one of the legendary grandes dames of New York. Her parents' union did not last long; Tree went on to notoriety as a mistress of director John Huston (briefly) and Adlai Stevenson (for many years), as well as the wife of an heir to the Marshall Field fortune.

Yet Frances FitzGerald achieved fame largely through her own efforts. After graduating from Radcliffe in 1962, Frankie (as pals call her) went to work at the Paris-based Congress for Cultural Freedom, a group that secretly received CIA funding (her father helped her land the job). She wanted to write a novel, but never did. So she ventured into journalism, first writing for the *New York Herald Tribune*, then jetting off to Vietnam on *The Atlantic Monthly*'s tab. Her reporting from Southeast Asia won her an elite audience, as well as space in *The New Yorker* and other leading magazines. In 1972, her book on Vietnam, *Fire in the Lake*, nabbed the Pulitzer Prize. A fawning profile in *Vogue* the following year called her "a remarkable young woman within a remarkable old family." She was made.

That first book's appeal is easy to understand—it was saturated with the highbrow anti-anti-Communism prevailing among liberal intellectuals, then and now. FitzGerald delivered idealized portraits of the North Vietnamese, condemned American involvement, and looked forward to "one of those sudden historical shifts when 'individualism' and its attendant corruption gives way to the discipline of the revolutionary community." Yes, the revolution must come: "It will simply mean that the moment has arrived for the narrow flame of revolution to cleanse the lake of Vietnamese society from the corruption and disorder of the American war. . . . It is the only way the Vietnamese of the south can restore their country and their history to themselves."

Since the heady days of Vietnam, FitzGerald has produced features from far-flung countries for all the right magazines, and two well-received books: *America Revised*, a study of history textbooks, and *Cities on a Hill*, a collection of essays on offbeat American communities. All of it was beautifully and smartly written.

FitzGerald will probably be best remembered for *Fire in the Lake*, but *Way Out There in the Blue* may in fact be her most important book—the one that has the greatest opportunity to shape attitudes in the new century, even if it doesn't win a Pulitzer or remain in print three decades from now. Vietnam is a thing of the past; missile defense may be a part of our future. To the extent that FitzGerald discredits Reagan's SDI program—which she strives mightily to do—her book may leave a visible imprint on nationalsecurity strategy.

At the center of *Way Out There in the Blue* is an attempt to understand the character of Reagan. Much of it is plain biography. FitzGerald's colored view of the man is clear from the title, which comes from a line in Arthur Miller's *Death of a Salesman*: "He's a man way out there in the blue, riding on a smile and a shoeshine." Yet calling FitzGerald a Reagan hater would be simplistic, and mistaken. She's actually fascinated by Reagan and avoids falling into the trap of dismissing him, in typical liberal style, as an "amiable dunce." But she certainly doesn't like him. "He didn't appeal to Northeast city people like me," she told the *Washington Post* earlier this year. "What bell was ringing with other Americans that I couldn't hear?"

It turns out, writes Fitzgerald, that the Great Communicator advanced SDI by visiting the hidden corners of the American subconscious. The semi-famous story of Reagan's pre-presidential trip to NORAD's underground base in Colorado, where he supposedly became awestruck by America's naked vulnerability to missile attack, "recalls the caves of the Nibelungen in Wagner's *Ring* and the caves of Norse mythology, where the dwarves, the 'smiths,' forge magical weapons: swords and spears which can never be broken and never miss their mark." (The source for this episode, former Reagan aide Martin Anderson, says of FitzGerald's treatment: "My charitable view is that she deliberately misrepresented it. You don't want to hear my uncharitable view.") But more important than the dwarves, Reagan trafficked in "millennial prophecy" and what Richard Hofstadter labeled the "paranoid style" of politics. Missile defense enchanted the public because it held "the promise that America might once again become an invulnerable sanctuary, its sacred soil inviolate, as it was in the mythic past." Alan Brinkley's *New York Times* review considered this an important way of looking at SDI: "In the past, the dream of isolation had led to efforts to keep the United States

Frances FitzGerald by David Smith

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unconnected to other nations, an idea clearly obsolete in the 1980s. Now a miraculous new technology promised to do what diplomacy could not."

But FitzGerald's book is a classic case of trying to make the facts fit a theory, rather than the other way around. In reality, Reagan promised over and over to share antimissile technology with other countries, including the Soviet Union. It was Mikhail Gorbachev who told Reagan, at their 1986 meeting in Reykjavik, "Excuse me, Mr. President, but I do not take your idea of sharing SDI seriously." Lou Cannon reports—in *President Reagan: The Role of a Lifetime*, his history of the Reagan presidency—that Reagan "became intensely angry" at this rebuff, and walked out on Gorbachev a bit later.

Clearly, presidents who want to be "unconnected to other nations" don't become enraged when foreign leaders turn down proposals to share military technology. But FitzGerald continues in this inaccurate vein throughout her entire dense narrative, whacking conservatives at every opportunity. (Reagan's defense advisers, she writes, came from the "fringes of their profession.") She also recycles the most tired clichés about the 1980s: "a time of false prosperity, indulgence, and speculation, when even the most solid middle-class citizens dreamed of getting something for nothing." She believes ordinary Americans are idiots: "Most Americans wanted military spending and a tax cut; they wanted a tax cut and Social Security with cost-of-living increases; they bought junk bonds and forgot the risk associated with them." They're phonies, too: "They went to visit theme parks rather than real places."

More seriously, she suggests Cold War hawks had little to do with the collapse of the Soviet Union. "I don't know any American Soviet scholar who believes that the United States ended the Cold War," she recently told the *Chicago Tribune*. But FitzGerald herself makes little use of Soviet sources. Didn't the Kremlin leaders, in fact, worry greatly about SDI? "Yes, they were very worried," she says in an interview. "But they knew perfectly well that missile defense could be overwhelmed offensively." So why were they worried? "The program had a magical effect on both Americans and Russians." Huh? "It's magical thinking." Her best explanation of why the Russians took SDI seriously amounts to a theory that they were self-deluded, just like the silly Americans who visit theme parks rather than real places.

But FitzGerald's greatest disservice to both Reagan and missile defense may lie in her mischaracterization of its technological feasibility. On the second-to-last page of *Way Out There in the Blue*, she finally gets around to admitting that the Pentagon is "learning how to hit a bullet with a bullet in outer space." She really has no choice: Numerous missile-defense programs have shown impressive results within the last twelve months. The outcome of another test, scheduled for July, might compel President Clinton—up to now, an arms-control dogmatist with a boundless dislike of missile defense—to order the construction of a modest missile-defense system in Alaska.

Yet it pains FitzGerald to acknowledge that missile defense may in fact be working; her admission comes after nearly 500 pages of text suggesting that it could *not* be made to work. She couches the sentence as artfully as she can, declaring that there's "still no capable interceptor on the horizon." And she adds a dark slant: "As always for the Republican right, the goal was weapons in space—that is, weapons which, if they materialized, could contribute to an offense, as well as provide a defense for the United States." These are the final words of her book, her last chance to leave an impression on her readers. And she wants them to know that she thinks there's a pretty good chance that conservative missile-defense advocates are pining for a first strike.

FitzGerald, who is now being hailed as the preeminent expert on the history of SDI, claims that there was trickery at the heart of the program: "We were lied to. People were talking about laser weapons in space as if they were an imminent possibility." In the interest of accuracy—in a book containing nearly 1,700 footnotes, a bibliography citing hundreds of sources, and a glossary—she should have found space for an appendix printing Reagan's first speech mentioning SDI, in 1983. He called it a "formidable technical task" and one that "may not be accomplished before the end of the century." He was right on both counts.

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FitzGerald's greatest disservice to both Reagan and missile defense may lie in her mischaracterization of its feasibility.

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With *Way Out There in the Blue*, FitzGerald joins the chorus of 21st-century Luddites proclaiming that missile defense just won't ever function properly. "By 1999," she writes in the book, "the prospects for deploying an effective interceptor remained not very much brighter than they had been in 1983." In a June 4 *New York Times* op-ed piece timed to coincide with the Clinton-Putin summit, she used her newfound eminence as a missile-defense doyenne to make the case that the limited missile-defense system proposed by Clinton and Al Gore "may never work reliably."

But the effectiveness of missile defense remains an open question, and we won't know the truth of it unless liberals abandon their circular view that missile defense shouldn't be funded for testing because it may never work reliably, and that it may never work reliably because it has not been properly tested. What's clear is that the nature of war is changing for good, as dizzying new technologies emerge. On June 6, in its first live-warhead test of a high-energy laser, the Army shot down a Russian-made artillery rocket. "We've just turned science fiction into reality," crowed Lt. Gen. John Costello, commander of the U.S. Army Space and Missile Defense Command.

The most interesting thing about the picture of the test, however, wasn't the fiery orange explosion. It was the background, the gorgeous blue New Mexico sky—and the fact that you would have seen something very disquieting for FitzGerald's thesis, if you had actually *looked* way out there in the blue. **NR**

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Tongues of Tin

The state of political oratory

MICHAEL KNOX BERAN

With another presidential election upon us, consider the state of political oratory in America: It is not good. George W. Bush's speeches are full of provocative ideas and suggest that the candidate has done some serious thinking (really). But the uniformly optimistic tone of his speeches eventually becomes tiresome. Candidates who attempt to imitate Ronald Reagan's sunny confidence in the future too often forget that Reagan was a master of a variety of rhetorical tones and styles. Controlled anger, conversational intimacy, plain humor, patriotic poetry—they were all in the Reagan repertory. Pollyanna Reagan was not.

Al Gore's performances are a different matter. The nondescript prose of the vice president's speeches is upstaged by the peculiarities of his delivery. When he pauses for effect, Gore has a habit of lifting his eyebrows, turning his head slightly to the side while simultaneously lowering it, and looking at the camera out of the corners of his eyes, like a person who has practiced in front of a mirror one too many times. This is perhaps nothing more than a manifestation of a politician's pardonable vanity. Lyndon Johnson used to think that one side of his face photographed better than the other; maybe Al Gore believes that he appears more presidential when he is captured in quasi-profile. And yet there is something disconcerting in this particular vice-presidential mannerism: Gore's arched brows, together with his dark hair, put one in mind of an actor made up for *The Mikado*.

This much is certain: The vice president's set speeches are very dull, and he was wise, during the heat of the contest with Bill Bradley, to abandon them in favor of unscripted soliloquies interspersed with questions from voters. The speeches Gore gives these days are full of an especially trying kind of self-righteousness: laundry lists of legislation that he has supported in the past and federal programs—described as "crusades," "initiatives," and "special commitments"—that he proposes for the future.

No revival of the rhetorical arts is to be looked for this year. America will get the political oratory it deserves. The soothing conversational tones of the candidates' speeches will perfectly echo our casual, dressed-down age, our impatience with any form of mannered art, our contempt for any ritual of elaborate civic civility. The candidates know that no special sensitivity to language is required to win—Bill Clinton has shown them that much. Clinton, who is nothing if not a successful politician, has very little feeling for words, or chooses not to reveal it if he has. He is, of course, alert to nuance and the finer shades of verbal meaning. He is a master of evasion, equivocation, the splitting of semantic hairs. And he has perfected the art of the poll-tested applause line. But no scraps of Clintonian oratory attach themselves to the memory in the way that Reagan's ("Mr. Gorbachev, tear down this wall!") or Kennedy's ("Ask not . . .") do.

The phrases one does associate with Clinton are not exactly gems of the speechmaker's art. One of these—"It's the economy, stupid"—derives from a sign posted in his 1992 campaign war room, while another—"It depends on what the meaning of the word 'is' is"—was delivered in a legal proceeding. This second utterance, it is true, bears some resemblance to Pilate's question, "What is truth?" But Pilate's words have a weary urbanity quite absent from the president's formulation. Clinton's apparent blindness to literary art is perfectly consistent with his graduate-student intellectual sensibility, and demonstrates that even a modest literary culture is no longer requisite for success in American politics.

THE OLD SCHOOLS

What of the rhetorical traditions we have lost? For the English-speaking nations, there are really only two. The first, the classical—or really the Ciceronian—is sober, lapidary, and, at its best, characterized by an Olympian grace, the linguistic equivalent of a Greek temple. Its genius is concentrated in the ordered rhythms of the prose, rhythms that are controlled by means of an array of literary devices. Lord Bolingbroke, the British statesman of Queen Anne's time, was perhaps the greatest English-speaking exemplar of this tradition. Thomas Jefferson thought Bolingbroke's style one of "the highest order." He found in him a "lofty, rhythmical, full-flowing eloquence" worthy of Cicero, and argued that his "writings are certainly the finest examples in the English language of the eloquence proper for the Senate." Both Alexander Hamilton and Daniel Webster belong to the Ciceronian tradition in American oratory; John Kennedy may have been its greatest 20th-century master. Kennedy relied heavily on the kind of rhetorical tricks that schoolchildren learn (or used to learn) when studying Cicero: "Let us never negotiate out of fear, but let us never fear to negotiate"; "Liberty without learning is always in peril, and learning without liberty is always in vain."

The problem with this tradition is that it all too easily degenerates into hopeless pomposity. Garry Wills, in *The Kennedy Imprisonment*, might have put it too strongly when he said that the "famous antitheses and alliterations" of Kennedy's speeches "sound tinny now." Does Wills prefer the epicene vacuousness of Adlai Stevenson, or the monotone drone of Bill Clinton? But he was right to draw attention to the chief weakness of neo-classical rhetoric. Without discipline and a fastidious sense of rhetorical propriety, the speaker will produce only bombast or false grandeur.

There is a second tradition, more deeply imaginative than the Ciceronian, wilder, more exotic, more sinuous. Its roots in the language are deeper—are found in the literature of the Elizabethan and Jacobean periods, periods when,

Mr. Beran's essay on Robert Kennedy and George W. Bush appeared in our June 5 issue. His book about Kennedy is *The Last Patrician*.

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Emerson said, the English language had "its teeth and bones and muscles largest and strongest." Where the rhythms of Ciceronian speech are as crucial to the effect as the words and images, the prose of the second tradition—the tradition of Shakespeare and the King James Bible—depends for its power upon the strength of its language and imagery. Public men like Francis Bacon and Edmund Burke were masters of this second rhetorical style. Ciceronian orderliness could never have appealed to Bacon. "There is no excellent beauty," he said, "that hath not some strangeness in the proportion." Burke's rhetoric proves the truth of Bacon's maxim. His style awed the critic William Hazlitt with "its severe extravagance, its literal boldness, its matter-of-fact hyperboles, its running away with a subject and from it at the same time."

The influence of the imaginative tradition helped to prevent, in the British oratory and prose of the 19th century, the fatty excess, the Ciceronian grandiloquence, that burdened so much American eloquence during the same period. But although the imaginative tradition has had fewer disciples in America than in Britain, something of its influence can be detected in the way the greatest of America's statesmen have reached back into the history of the language—its strongest bones and muscles—for their most striking formulations. Abraham Lincoln, running for the Senate in 1858, told his law partner, William Herndon, that he sought "some universally known" figure of speech to "strike home to the minds of men in order to raise them up to the peril of the times." Lincoln found the right passage in the Gospel of Mark, as King James's scholars had rendered it: "If a house be divided against itself, that house cannot stand." Ronald Reagan demonstrated a similar ability to reach back into the past when he chose a powerful but, at the time, wholly unfashionable word—"evil," Milton's word, a King James Bible word—to describe the Soviet Union.

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The example of Lincoln suggests how much the imaginative tradition in Anglo-American rhetoric has to offer the public speaker.

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The example of Lincoln suggests how much the imaginative tradition in Anglo-American rhetoric has to offer the public speaker. It is sometimes said that Lincoln inaugurated a stylistic revolution in favor of a simpler political prose,

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but the simplicity of his style is deceptive. While Lincoln rebelled against Ciceronian grandiloquence, such Lincolnian formulations as "the last full measure of devotion" or "for him who shall have borne the battle, and for his widow, and his orphan," are not precisely simple. "The truth about Mr. Lincoln," William Herndon said, "is that he read less and thought more than any man in his sphere in America." But if Lincoln's literary culture was not broad, it was deep. He did not read many contemporary books, according to Herndon, and he thought biography a swindle. But he nevertheless immersed himself in the two great sources of imaginative prose, the Bible and Shakespeare. His own public pronouncements reflect their influence.

If Lincoln *did* inaugurate a rhetorical revolution in America, as is sometimes maintained, it's not clear that anyone followed his lead. Ciceronian grandiloquence continued to be the standard in American politics until well into the 20th century. Some of this elaborate, high-Victorian rhetoric was first-rate (like the younger Holmes's Memorial Day addresses). Much of it wasn't. Woodrow Wilson's reputation for eloquence has never recovered from the assault in which H. L. Mencken called attention to "its ideational hollowness, its ludicrous strutting and bombast, its heavy dependence on greasy and meaningless words, its frequent descents to mere sound and fury, signifying nothing." Even FDR's great speeches are characterized by a degree of grandiloquence. "So first of all, let me assert my firm belief, that the only thing we have to fear is fear itself." Lincoln would have scratched the preliminary clauses and let the meat of the sentence stand alone. But Lincoln had a weak voice and could not glory in a series of subordinate clauses the way a Webster or an FDR could. Roosevelt could invest even the most ordinary phrase with a high dramatic significance. Simply listen to the way he said, "Yesterday, December 7, 1941 . . ." The greatness of FDR's speeches derives less from their literary merit than from the splendor of Roosevelt's delivery, the qualities of his voice, the supreme confidence he displayed on the rostrum or at the microphone.

THE ORATORY OF 'LET'S DO LUNCH'

The old rhetorical traditions are for the most part gone, as irrecoverable as frock coats and the Latin Mass. The conversational style of public speaking is here to stay: soothing words, set off, at appropriate intervals, by pointed soundbites—the rhetorical equivalent of elevator music interspersed with police sirens. Like the confessional mode to which it is related, the conversational style creates an impression of intimacy—of collapsing barriers, falling façades—which, though it is quite false, appeals to us. Like our casual, dress-down attire, the conversational style creates a phony impression of naturalness and ease: phony because, just as forsaking a necktie does nothing to mitigate the pressures of a job, so a casual, conversational style of speaking does nothing to mitigate a candidate's reliance, in everything he says, on polling data and focus groups. In each case, we are seduced by the belief that in relaxing standards, in lowering barriers, in embracing informality, we draw nearer to a more authentic and more "natural" humanity.

The evidence, of course, points in a different direction. Even Rousseau admitted that man in the natural state, for all his freedom, was a "stupid and limited animal." We are victims of our shortsightedness. So bound up with a particular civilized order are traditions like polished oratory, the wearing of neckties, the holding of doors by men for women, that we cannot see how much indirect good they do us; we perceive only their direct (and rather limited) effects. Do away with them, however, and you soon enough get a dumbed-down humanity, duller, more vulgar, more brutish.

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The best that can be hoped for, where public speaking is concerned, is that candidates find ways to use the old, strong words in the way that Reagan did.

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Simplicity and ease have their place, in political oratory as in life. But so do intricacy, formality, and a respect for the elaborate. This is the point of a celebrated essay of Isaiah Berlin's on Winston Churchill. Defending Churchill's prose and his "deliberate return to a formal mode of English utterance which extends from Gibbon and Dr. Johnson to Peacock and Macaulay," Berlin argued that there "are those who, inhibited by the furniture of the ordinary world, come to life only when they feel themselves actors upon a stage . . . can function freely only in uniform or armour or court dress, see only through certain kinds of spectacles, act fearlessly only in situations which in some way are formalised for them, see life as a kind of play in which they and others are assigned certain lines which they must speak." In eliminating the mandarin element in human life, whether in dress or manners, in rhetoric or religion, you eliminate something of the poetry as well, the very things that, in Burke's words, serve "to cover the defects of our naked, shivering nature, and to raise it to dignity in our own estimation."

No candidate can by himself defy the trends that have replaced public speaking with palaver, civility with casual days. If he is to win over his contemporaries, a candidate must in some measure sympathize with the spirit of his age. The best that can be hoped for, where public speaking is concerned, is that candidates find ways to use the old, strong words in the way that Reagan did—easily and unself-consciously, and yet without violating the conversational canons of the moment. Granted, of all the things that we have to worry about, the shortcomings of our politicians' speaking abilities must rank low. It may be that prosperous ages don't *need* great public prose; splendid oratory may be the consolation prize that God bestows upon troubled times. There is a sense, then, in which George Bush and Al Gore will do just fine. They have this obligation only: to try to keep alive some faint memory of the real power of language, that it might be preserved for a time when strong words are needed once more. **NR**

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The Male Eunuch

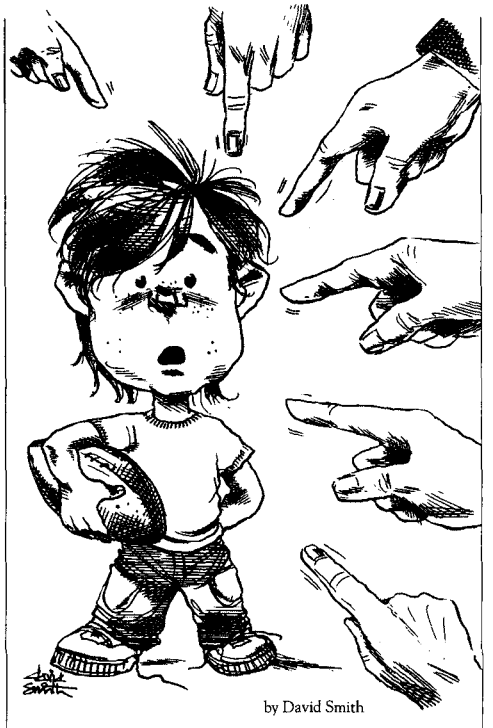
RICHARD LOWRY

The War Against Boys: How Misguided Feminism Is Harming Our Young Men, by Christina Hoff Sommers (Simon & Schuster, 251 pp., $25)

A COUPLE of kindergarten boys were recently suspended from school in New Jersey after being caught red-handed playing cops and robbers at recess. Finger-pointing, shouting "bang," running, playing dead—the incident involved the whole sorry litany of playground mock aggression. School officials were enforcing a Columbine-inspired "zero tolerance" policy against firearms at school, even the thumb-and-forefinger variety (where are the trigger locks?). But they were also acting on another trend afoot in American education: a disapproval of all the things boys do during recess. The Atlanta schools have eliminated recess altogether.

Snips and snails and puppy dogs' tails have fallen on tough times. In fact, as Christina Hoff Sommers demonstrates in *The War Against Boys*, they have powerful enemies. The new book by the author of *Who Stole Feminism?* is a stinging indictment of an anti-male movement that has had a pervasive influence on the nation's schools and seeks, at bottom, nothing less than to eliminate the need for exasperated women ever again to shake their heads and mutter, "Boys will be boys." Sommers, an expert at debunking shoddy (and trendy) research, exposes the ballyhooed "crisis of young girls" as the creation of feminists armed with dubious studies and savvy PR skills.

Girls, the story goes, are supposedly ignored by teachers who call only on



by David Smith

boys in the classroom and otherwise (vaguely) neglect and abuse them, catastrophically undermining their self-confidence. "Just as planes and ships disappear mysteriously into the Bermuda Triangle, so do the selves of girls go down in droves," Mary Pipher argued in her hit girl-crisis book *Reviving Ophelia*. "They crash and burn." Sommers catches Pipher in a typical bit of statistical dishonesty. Pipher cites the fact that suicide rates among children aged 10 to 14 rose 57 percent between 1979 and 1988 as evidence that "something dramatic is happening to adolescent girls." Actually, the suicide rate for boys had increased 71 percent, and for girls 27 percent; 61 girls killed themselves in 1988, 176 boys.

When it comes to girls in school, don't think of poor Ophelia, but the Reese Witherspoon character in the movie *Election*—together, smart, leaving the boys behind. Girls get better grades, do more homework, engage in more extracurricular activities, enroll in more advanced-placement classes (and fewer special-education classes), go to college in greater numbers, and so on. This doesn't mean that girls are academically superior to boys; just that the special needs of boys are being neglected. As competitiveness and individual initiative are discouraged, classroom discipline loosened, and outlets for natural rambunctiousness—e.g., recess—eliminated, schoolboys tend to tune out or turn on (to Ritalin).

Sommers traces the fundamental problem to the progressive, "child-centered" educational theories dominant in American schools. "Education and instruction should from the very first be passive, observant, protective, rather than prescribing, determining, interfering." Thus did Friedrich Froebel, the 19th-century inventor of kindergarten, sum up what would become the tenets of progressive education. But boys need their "prescribing" in big, strong doses. If they don't get it, they drift into their own little worlds of inattention and underachievement. Sommers points for evidence to Britain, which has addressed lagging boys by re-emphasizing teacher-led work, structured classrooms, frequent tests, and strict homework checks, sometimes in all-male classes led by male instructors. Early results suggest that in Britain, easily distracted Johnny now finds it easier to learn how to read.

If American boys are trailing girls, why all the focus on Ophelia? The career of superstar Harvard psychologist Carol Gilligan is central to the answer. Famous as the first women's-studies professor at that institution, she is the chief phrenologist of academic feminism. In the past, she has rejected conventional standards of evidence as masculine tools—and apparently meant it. Her best-selling 1982 book, *In a Different Voice*, argued that women have a moral psychology distinct from that of men. But other scholars haven't been able to confirm her findings and the

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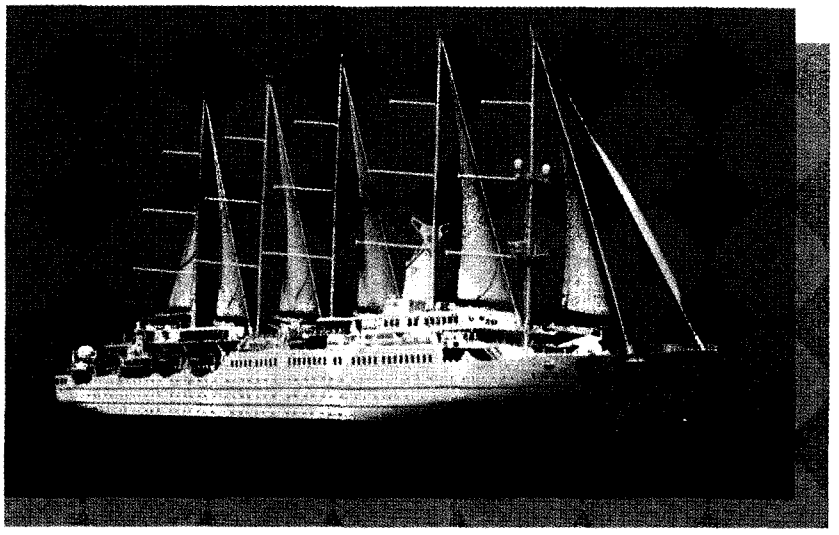

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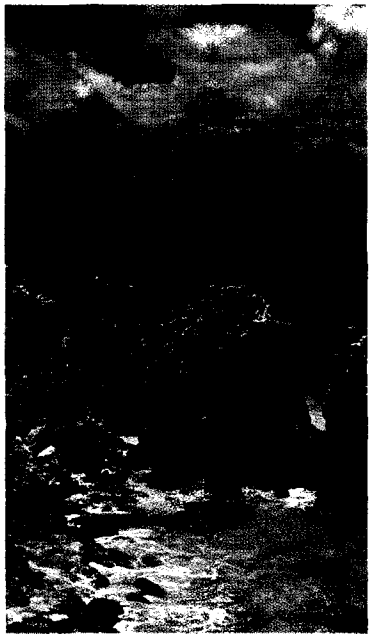

ST BARTHÉLEMY, LEEWARD ISLANDS. Tiny "St Barts" has long been the haunt of the very rich who come for privacy, gorgeous beaches, and exquisite French cuisine. Travel down hilly narrow roads in open-air Jeeps or "mini-mokes." In Gustavia, quaint streets lead past small markets and bakeries—and dozens of small shops selling French perfumes, sportswear, watches, and crystal.

BRIDGETOWN, BARBADOS. This infectiously happy island, with beautiful beaches and balmy weather, has a delightful British flair. As a result of its successful sugar economy in the 17th and 19th centuries, you'll find large manor estates full of fine Barbados mahogany and antiques, along with gaily painted wooden-frame houses—the essence of the festive Caribbean. Rum rules in Barbados, and, over the centuries, cane plantations have divided the landscape into a pretty patchwork of fields, coconut and royal palms, breadfruit, oleander, and citrus trees.

ILES DES SAINTES, LESSER ANTILLES. Pastoral and far off the beaten track, the Saintes are a cluster of eight islands off the southern coast of Guadeloupe. In Bourg, the charming hamlet on Terre-de-Haut, the largest island, you can wander peaceful streets past small houses, then follow the narrow road out of town through fields and hills to a sweeping strand of secluded beaches.

NEVIS, LEEWARD ISLANDS. Nevis is an almost-perfect volcanic cone rising up from the sea and covered with bougainvillea, hibiscus, and many other lush tropical plants. For a time we'll be anchoring outside of Charlestown, the island's capital, for those who wish to go ashore on tours or on their own, then repositioning to a nearby idyllic beach for an afternoon of watersports, sunning, and a festive beach barbecue.

PIGEON ISLAND, ST. LUCIA, WINDWARD ISLANDS. The Pitons, two volcanic peaks rising to more than 2,400 feet, mark St. Lucia, an island of lush green valleys, banana plantations, and bubbling sulfur springs. Some 24 miles of vibrant reef make it a haven for divers and snorkelers. Pigeon Island National Park, connected to the mainland by a causeway, was once a pirates' hideaway. Today, impressive ruins of old English forts, archaeological relics of Arawak Indians, and splendid beaches make this a fascinating place to explore.

ST MARTIN, DUTCH ANTILLES. St Martin, the "French" side of this beautiful island (the "Sint Maarten" half is Dutch) of white-sand beaches (there are over 10 miles of them!), features the *chic* capital city, Marigot, of shops, bistros, and *ooo-la-la* charming cafés. Cross the Dutch border and head for lively Philipsburg, where you will find gingerbread West Indian buildings that house excellent duty-free shops.

Exciting, Exclusive Itinerary

DATE	PORT/TIMES	EXCLUSIVE *NR* EVENTS
Dec. 10 (Sun.)	Bridgetown, Barbados	Midnight departure
Dec. 11 (Mon.)	At Sea	Morning & Afternoon Seminars, Cocktail Reception (pre-dinner)
Dec. 12 (Tue.)	Nevis, 8AM–5PM	Late-night smoker (post-dinner)
Dec. 13 (Wed.)	St Martin, 8AM–1AM	Morning Seminar
Dec. 14 (Thur.)	St Barthélemy, 8AM–5PM	Morning Seminar
Dec. 15 (Fri.)	Iles des Saintes, 8AM–5PM	Afternoon Seminar, Late-night smoker (post-dinner)
Dec. 16 (Sat.)	Pigeon Island, 7AM–5PM	Afternoon Seminar, Cocktail Reception (pre-dinner)
Dec. 17 (Sun.)	Bridgetown, 6AM arrival	

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2000 POST-ELECTION CRUISE APPLICATION

Mail to: National Review Cruise, The Cruise Authority, 1307 Powers Ferry Rd., Marietta, GA 30067-5409 or Fax to 770-916-1425

Please fill out application completely and mail with deposit check or fax with credit-card information. One application per cabin. If you want more than one cabin, make copies of this application. For questions call The Cruise Authority at 800-326-4971.

PERSONAL

Name #1 (full legal name) + Nickname _____ shirt size (M/L/XL) _____

Name #2 (full legal name) + Nickname _____ shirt size (M/L/XL) _____

Names #3 & #4 (if taking others in your cabin) _____

Street Mailing Address _____

City _____ State _____ Zip _____

( ) _____

Daytime Phone

PAYMENT

A deposit of $1,500 per cabin is due with this application. Cabins and Categories are available on a first come, first served basis.

☐ My deposit of $1,500 per cabin is included.
(Make checks payable to "National Review Cruise")

☐ Charge to: AmEx ☐ Visa ☐ MasterCard ☐ Discover

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Expiration Date (Month) ☐☐ (Year) ☐☐

Each time you use the National Review *credit card to make a purchase, the card's issuer, MBNA America Bank, N.A., will make a contribution to* National Review!

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Authorized Signature of Cardholder/Guest

Information and a price quote on Cancellation Fee Waiver/Medical Insurance will accompany your statement. Cancellation Penalty Schedule follows (cancellations must be received in writing by the date indicated):

Prior to July 11, 2000	$75 per person
July 11 to September 11, 2000	$750 per person
After September 11, 2000	100% of cruise

CRUISE

(All rates are per person, double occupancy. Single rates available upon request. Air/Sea rates include roundtrip air and transfers from select gateways, all port charges and taxes, all gratuities, meals, entertainment, and *National Review* activities. Cruise-only rates include all of above except airfare. Failure to appear for embarkation for any reason constitutes a cancellation subject to full penalties. Personal items not included.)

BE SURE TO CHECK ALL APPLICABLE BOXES FOR YOUR CRUISE!

I. CABIN CATEGORY

Choice of Cabin Category: ☐ Suite (*limited*!) ☐ Deluxe Cabin

Bedding: Beds made up as ☐ Twin ☐ Queen

Booking Single?: Do you want us to try to match you with a roommate?

☐ Yes (your age ____) ☐ No

II. AIR/TRANSFER PACKAGES

☐ I/we will provide our own roundtrip air to Barbados (see below).

☐ Book my air from _____ (see list below).

III. GENERAL INFORMATION

Citizenship: Is everyone a U.S. citizen? ☐ Yes ☐ No

If No, indicate citizenship _____

_____
Special Information (medical conditions, celebrating anniversary, etc.)

IMPORTANT

Everyone cruising will be required to bring either a valid passport OR a certified birth certificate (with raised seal), plus photo ID. Failure to do so may result in being denied boarding of the *WindSurf*. Children do not require photo ID.

CONDITIONS FOR PASSAGE: H2O, Ltd. d/b/a The Cruise Authority or National Review, Inc., its owners, agents or employees accept no responsibility whatsoever for illness, accident, death, dismemberment, weather, strikes, acts of God, or the accessibility, appearance, actions, or decisions of those individuals promoted for the cruise. Nor can the above-mentioned entities be held responsible for the actions of Holland America Line/Windstar Cruises, participating air carriers, or shoreside personnel or subcontractors. Return of this application indicates full understanding and acceptance of these conditions for passage.

NR36

AIR TRAVEL TO BARBADOS: Due to the nature of the cruise, Windstar Cruises is unable to offer extensive airfare options. Please consider one of the following options for making air transportation to Barbados for the cruise. Please know that you **must** arrive in Bridgetown, Barbados, *no later than 10:00PM on Sunday, December 10, 2000*, in order to make the ship in time for sailing. Do **not** schedule a return flight before 9:00AM on Sunday, December 17, 2000 (this will allow you ample time to disembark the *WindSurf*, transfer, and go through customs). Complimentary roundtrip transfers to/from the airport will be provided, but you must forward your air schedule to The Cruise Authority no later than November 24, 2000. **OPTION 1**: Book your own air schedule, making certain to adhere to the times discussed above. This option gives you the greatest flexibility and control over your air schedule. **OPTION 2**: You may contact American Airlines and access a discount group fare which has been set up specifically for the *National Review* group. Call toll-free, 1-800-433-1790, and refer to **Star File #69DOUA**. Make your booking and pay for it as you normally would with any airline. **OPTION 3**: Book your air via Windstar Cruises from the "gateways" listed below. A forced overnight may be required either pre- or post-cruise, at your expense, and we have no control over when or if it will be required. Prices are per person, round trip, coach. Gateways with asterisk marks (**) traditionally require a forced overnight in Miami ($132) or Barbados ($195):

Atlanta	$760	Detroit	$1,010	Oklahoma City	$940	San Francisco	$980
Baltimore	$850	Houston	$910	Orlando	$760	Seattle**	$1,060
Boston	$740	Kansas City	$930	Philadelphia	$750	St. Louis	$1,060
Chicago	$860	Los Angeles	$930	Phoenix**	$1,070	Tampa	$760
Cincinnati	$990	Miami	$660	Pittsburgh	$900	Tucson	$1,060
Cleveland	$920	Minneapolis	$1,070	Portland**	$1,070	Washington, DC	
Dallas	$900	New Orleans	$800	Salt Lake City**	$1,050	(DCA or IAD)	$780
Denver	$980	New York	$830	San Diego**	$1,040		

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three studies on which Gilligan supposedly based her work are suspiciously under wraps, unavailable for peer review. As Sommers writes, all of this has led to "serious complaints of a type that, in disciplines that respect scholarly standards, have been known to lead to censure—or worse."

Fortunately for Gilligan, her specialty isn't quantum mechanics, but "gender theory." In two books after *Different Voice*, Gilligan explored the way adolescent girls are traumatized by a "male-voiced" culture and quickly learn that "people . . . [do] not want to hear what girls know." So, according to Gilligan, preteen girls "know" things that they then "forget" in their teens as they are beaten down by the patriarchy. This provocative conclusion is based on small samples and extremely subjective interpretations. To simplify: Bitchy or politically liberal statements from girls are considered "knowing" by Gilligan, while anything polite or accepting of authority is taken as evidence of the dominant male culture at work.

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The idea is that there is nothing wrong with boys that can't be fixed if they stop acting like boys. As Gloria Steinem puts it, 'We need to raise boys like we raise girls.'

■

That Gilligan's latest work did more than provide grist for tendentious dissertations is a testament to the power of marketing. *The New York Times Magazine* trumpeted her findings. The Ms. Foundation latched on to them and launched Take Our Daughters to Work Day. The American Association of University Women commissioned two studies meant to support Gilligan's conclusions and pin the blame for girls' low self-esteem on discrimination in schools. Headlines blared—the AAUW spent $100,000 on research for the second study, $150,000 on promotion—and Congress passed the "Gender Equity in Education Act." When the AAUW sponsored yet another study in 1995—this one much more scientifically rigorous—the results contradicted the earlier dire conclusions; according to Sommers, this third study was not mentioned in a single newspaper article.

In the late '90s, Gilligan turned to the subject of boys, whom, she concluded, were also being traumatized by the patriarchy (which at least is an equal-opportunity oppressor). A fellow charlatan named William Pollack won major media attention after Columbine by talking, in a similar vein, of "Ophelia's brothers." The idea is that there is nothing wrong with boys that can't be fixed if they stop acting like boys. Or, as Gloria Steinem puts it, "We need to raise boys like we raise girls." This gets to the heart of the matter. Critics often say feminists hate men. That's not quite it—they actually hate masculinity.

One Department of Education-funded consultant warns against Little League, "where parents and friends sit on the sidelines and encourage aggressive, violent behavior" (stealing bases, sliding home, etc.). The women at Ms. briefly suggested a boys' equivalent of Take Our Daughters to Work Day, which would have included a visit to abused women's shelters—just so the little guys would know what violent bastards men are. This is the subtext of—now effectively Supreme Court-mandated—sexual-harassment training in schools. So, boys are forbidden to engage in traditional boyish behaviors, and subjected to propaganda about the evils of men. If all this doesn't bleach the masculinity from them, well, that just shows—in the words of one influential feminist—the "need for [new] materials to defuse male resistance."

The War Against Boys bristles with examples of the kind that send parents fleeing from the public schools. Take Judy Logan, a middle-school teacher in San Francisco who is legendary among girl-partisans for her relentlessly feminizing pedagogy. Boys in her class are made to enjoy quilting, girls encouraged to vent their anger at men. In one project, Logan required each boy to give a presentation in the persona of an African-American woman. After one freckled-faced boy completed his rendition of Anita Hill, a delighted Logan exhorted the class, "Give her a hand, everyone!" The title of a chapter about Logan in an AAUW book: "Anita Hill Is a Boy: Tales from a Gender-Fair Classroom."

The fight against masculinity waged by foot soldiers like Judy Logan is not a bizarre sideshow to American culture. It is fundamental to the liberal project. The incorrigible maleness of men is a standing rebuke to the Rousseau-inspired notions of human moral plasticity that are central to liberalism. Sommers provides a charming, if slight, example: Her 14-year-old received a gooey, self-esteem essay exercise at school, asking whether he compared himself to others, whether he made such comparisons to make himself feel better, and whether such comparisons made him feel inferior. His answers, respectively: "Sometimes," "No, I do not," and "No." Academic feminists and their army of fellow-traveling psychologists and educational consultants must be scandalized by boys like this, who, despite everything, *just refuse to play with dolls*.

There is also an explicitly political element to the fight over boys. Tocqueville worried that the tender attentions of government would "soften" Americans and make them "timid." The modern welfare state has that tendency, but feminists are working toward the goal even more directly. It is no coincidence that behaviors frowned upon by liberals—owning guns, smoking, risk-taking generally—are predominantly male activities. Government fosters dependency, while feminist cultural warriors seek to rid the national character of precisely those traits that are naturally resistant to the nanny state: It's a pincer movement.

This is why Christina Hoff Sommers has written such an indispensable book, and why a goal for conservatives just as important as cutting taxes and limiting government should be keeping America safe for recess and Little League. **NR**

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A Son's Salute

GREGORY ORFALEA

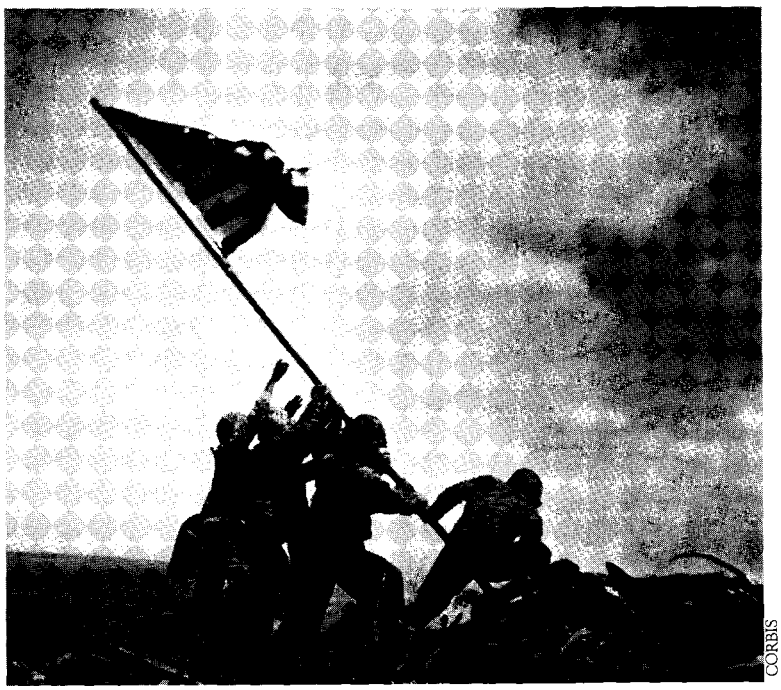
Flags of Our Fathers, by James Bradley, with Ron Powers (Bantam, 384 pp., $24.95)

THIS is less the story of a battle than of a photograph—probably the most famous photograph of the Second World War and perhaps any war: the planting of the American flag on Iwo Jima's Mount Suribachi on February 23, 1945, by six anonymous men who would never be anonymous again. It may well be that for sheer emotional weight, no image of war has had such a hold on American hearts. Perhaps it is the desperate togetherness of the men as they try to grip the pole: an image of national unity forged in global war and increasingly hard to hold through the Asian quagmires and fractured peace that have followed.

James Bradley is the son of John Bradley (the man in profile anchoring the pole's middle with a steady, firm grip), and he brings a heartfelt personal dimension to this penetrating and insightful look at an American icon. Bradley and his coauthor, Ron Powers, peel back the negative, as it were, to give us the positive (and not so positive) real lives of these six men, both before and after their date with history. In so doing, they have made a significant, and unusual, contribution to the study of American culture and mythmaking.

Among the many myths they dispel is that the photograph was posed: It was, in fact, the second flag-raising on Iwo, the first having been accomplished earlier in the day by twelve men who did pose. The second group was sent up by the battalion commander to hoist a larger flag, "so every son-of-a-bitch on this whole cruddy island can see it!" The commander also wanted the first flag for a souvenir.

To be sure, there is another story, without which the photograph is meaningless—the ferocious month-long battle for Iwo Jima that cost the lives of almost 7,000 Americans and nearly all the 22,000 Japanese holed up in a suicide stand. But while Bradley and Powers tell it vividly—often with horrifying verisimilitude—the uniqueness of their book lies in the devoted, piercing gaze they give to that photograph as symbol, as moment in history, as exploited icon, and as a fateful conjunction that burdened the flag-bearers more than it uplifted them. Indeed, those who survived the planting greeted the resulting notoriety with varying degrees of disgust.



CORBIS

Raising the flag on Mount Suribachi, February 23, 1945

Hurriedly put on a U.S. stamp in late summer 1945, the image sold a record 150 million stamps. In fact, the climax of the book is not really the battle at all, but what became known as "the Mighty 7th"—the last wartime U.S. bond drive. The surviving Marines were personally ordered home by President Roosevelt to participate, and people flocked to glimpse these American heroes. The tour netted $26.3 billion—nearly half the annual U.S. budget at the time. In a real way, The Photograph (as Bradley calls it) helped financed Hiroshima.

Flags focuses on the lives of the six men who, quite by chance, found themselves hoisting the piece of Japanese plumbing that became a U.S. flagpole on Mount Suribachi. The authors take the men from their homes in varied corners of the country before the war, through extensive training, to their date with destiny as part of Easy Company (2nd Battalion, 28th Regiment, 5th Division). Three of the six did not survive. Killed within days were Pvt. Franklin Sousley of Kentucky and the beloved Sgt. Mike Strank, the son of steelworking eastern-Pennsylvania Czech immigrants, who was done in by friendly fire. In the famous photo, Sousley and Strank are virtually indistinguishable as they interlace hands toward the back of the pole. The third was Cpl. Harlon Block from southern Texas, the determined figure on the right, planting the pole in rocks, who was later hit by mortar fire: "He gave a strangulated scream, 'They killed me!' He struggled with his intestines for a moment longer, then rolled to the ground and died facedown."

These three fit the senior Bradley's oft-repeated statement that the "real heroes of Iwo Jima are the guys who didn't come back." Yet the remaining three make the most fascinating, and tragic, portraits. Two died young: Pima Indian Ira Hayes, the figure on the far left whose hands do not grasp the pole, and whose story was told in two movies,

Mr. Orfalea is author of *Messengers of the Lost Battalion: The Heroic 551st and the Turning of the Tide at the Battle of the Bulge*, a book about his father's World War II paratroop unit. The long-disbanded 551st has just been awarded a Presidential Unit Citation.

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died of alcoholism. The other, Rene Gagnon, died of a wrecked heart: His creepy wife latched on to her husband's fame far beyond his capacity to stomach it. The only one who lived to a ripe age and enjoyed something resembling a normal life was Bradley's father, a medic during the war, who returned to Antigo, Wisconsin, to open a funeral home and father eight children. For the first four years after the war, he cried in his sleep.

The sensitivity of these portrayals is undercut by serious flaws that include a barrage of overstatement, errors of fact (Salerno, not Tarawa, was the war's first U.S. amphibious assault to face sustained opposition), cloying repetition, misidentification, poor diction ("suritude" is not a word), and bathos (as in, "many of them would ensure a long future of Christmases in America by laying down their lives for their buddies"). Assertions that Marines "never slowed down," are "the most rugged group of warriors in the world," have "the most demanding recruit training in the world," etc., would put to sleep the most patient Navy Seal or Army Special Forces paratrooper.

Yet *Flags of Our Fathers* captivates as the story behind a famous photo, a story that lives on in a son's heart. There's an intriguing new "tradition" of sons writing about their fathers' lives in the Second World War. At bottom is a son trying to bring an extraordinary father back to life, and wanting to teach us what a hero really is. As Bradley and Powers put it, "Celebrities seek fame. They take actions to get attention. Most often, the actions they take have no particular moral content. Heroes are heroes because they have risked something to help others. . . . Often, those heroes have been indifferent to the public's attention."

Bradley's father went about his life generously and meaningfully in a small Wisconsin town "where The Photograph did not distort things. Where its extraordinary power was overshadowed by the power of ordinary life." Men like Bradley's father gave us our world; sons like Bradley give them to us as they really were. Seeing them as ordinary men makes their heroism all the more stunning. **NR**

All Too Human

DAMON LINKER

In the Name of Humanity: Reflections on the Twentieth Century, by Alain Finkielkraut, translated by Judith Friedlander (Columbia, 133 pp., $24.50)

AMERICANS are of two minds about humanism, the view of the world that prizes human independence above all else and places human dignity, capacities, and beliefs at the center of life. While we admire the humanistic learning and insight of our founding generation, many of us also suspect that the humanism taught in our public schools and universities today is indistinguishable from godless immorality. We cling unquestioningly to our human rights and insist that secular and religious authorities respect them as inviolable. Yet we worry that weakening the power of traditional authority will result in relativism and nihilism. It seems, then, that we are finally suspicious of ourselves, troubled by the possibility that the very humanistic impulses that have led to what is best about America might also lead, when taken too far, to what is worst.

There are many reasons to read Alain Finkielkraut's *In the Name of Humanity*, but perhaps the most important is that its argument can be interpreted as a powerful and thoughtful vindication of American ambivalence about humanism. According to Finkielkraut, the brutal and bloody events that convulsed so much of the globe in the last century resulted mainly from attempts to impose various forms of radical humanism. Furthermore, he makes the case that the unfocused humanitarianism that has recently led the United States and Western Europe to intervene ineptly in local conflicts from Port-au-Prince to Pristina, while less harmful, is actually a tempered version of that same drive.

Mr. Linker teaches political theory at Brigham Young University.

This is an audacious argument, but Finkielkraut pulls it off through a stunning combination of erudition and moral seriousness—the same qualities that have led his earlier books to stand out among the many others produced by the impressive group of politically moderate intellectuals currently enjoying notoriety in France. As a Jew in a historically Catholic country, Finkielkraut has focused on the problem of how attachment to particularistic identities can be reconciled with a devotion to universal principles—and he has done so without

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Finkielkraut has a singular capacity to uncover the pathological humanistic urge in the unlikeliest locations.

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ever resorting to the fashionable and facile pronouncements that so often prevail in Europe and America. In *The Defeat of the Mind* (1987), for example, Finkielkraut gave us what is still one of our most profound and uncompromising critiques of multiculturalism, as well as an impassioned defense of enlightened reason against its many postmodern detractors. If his latest book is occasionally marred by the elliptical formulations, impressionistic argumentation, and somewhat pedantic name-dropping that are the perennial temptations of French intellectuals, he makes up for it with his singular capacity to uncover the pathological humanistic urge in the unlikeliest locations.

Surely the least likely of these is the ideology of National Socialism. The murderous Nazi regime would seem unambiguously antihumanist in both intent and deed. Yet Finkielkraut, expanding on the insights of Hannah Arendt and others, claims that Nazism embodied an extreme, though perverted, form of humanism. The Nazis equated the Aryan race with humanity as such, and understood their genocidal policies to be the most efficient way of ridding it of subhuman impurities. In

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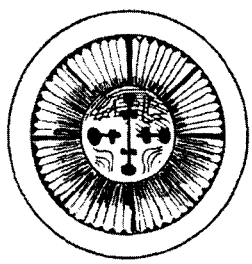
this way, they considered themselves to be exalting humanity while murdering millions of human beings. The Nazis were also completely atheistic: For Hitler and his followers, there was nothing whatsoever above humanity—spiritual, moral, or natural—that could impose limits on their actions. Nazism was thus a veritable apotheosis of humanism.

In this regard, Communism was indistinguishable from its fascist counterpart; both found it necessary to overthrow the heavens before conquering the world. But where Nazism sought to differentiate between the human and the subhuman, Communism treated all differentiation—by class, race, intelligence, nation, region, or religion—as fundamentally arbitrary, and thus worthy of being eradicated in the name of an ideally homogeneous humanity. Under Communism, man would achieve complete dominion over the world and at the same time over himself. Humanity in the plural would be replaced by the humanity of the undifferentiated mass.



Although few remain explicitly committed to the Communist ideal, its homogenizing impulse lives on (albeit in vastly weakened form) in the humanitarianism that increasingly dominates the foreign policy of the world's liberal democracies. Finkielkraut is at his blistering best when he exposes the cowardly and mawkish stance of those who embrace easy and ineffective "causes that can do no wrong" as a way of avoiding real moral complexity. Weary of making difficult choices, today's ideologues of sentimentality prefer to "fall back on the indisputable truth about human suffering"—namely, that it's bad and should be diminished. The proper course of action therefore seems obvious: We should avoid putting our soldiers in harm's way and inflict the least possible damage on those with whom we fight. We are thereby able to "express a sense of extreme moral urgency while enjoying the comfort of great moral security." No D-Days or Dresdens for us. Only sanctions and smart bombs, empty threats and threadbare diplomacy.

A genuine, properly limited humanism would look very different. Rather than embrace a "reductive simplicity" that conceals the complex texture of human life, the moderate form of humanism that Finkielkraut defends accepts this complexity. It recognizes that, although "it is inhuman . . . to define man by blood and soil" alone, it is "no less inhuman to leave him stumbling through life with the terrestrial foundations of his existence taken out from under him." Finkielkraut would have us acknowledge that "all that is given to man and is not constructed, chosen, or desired by him is not necessarily oppressive or alienating." In fact, "the limits to the power that everyone has over his life . . . make freedom possible" by giving man a determinate measure and circumscribed sphere within which to actualize that freedom. This is the paradoxical fact of human life that so many have been unwilling to endure.

Whether modern man will ever reconcile himself to the paradoxes of the human condition is a question that Finkielkraut's brief book could not have hoped to answer, but we can be grateful to him for preparing us to pose it for ourselves. **NR**

Being Smart Together

TRACY LEE SIMMONS

Greene on Capri: A Memoir, by Shirley Hazzard (Farrar, Straus, 149 pp., $22)

An English critic once wrote that some books aren't books at all, but "things in books' clothing." Graham Greene wrote real books if anyone has in our time. Although dead for nearly ten years, he continues to cast a long shadow. He was co-opted long ago by academics, yet his novels retain a wider public. He has been examined magisterially by one biographer and picked over by others. But biographies these days tend to serve up too much on the plate. One may prefer incisive morsels of insight to the mass of dubiously relevant detail.

Now Shirley Hazzard, a friend of Greene's for over 20 years, and a novelist herself, offers a memoir of exquisite brevity, telling us more about Greene in 150 pages than tomes of footnotes might do. And the story she tells doesn't suffer from being set amid the exotic beauty of the island of Capri.

Set in the Mediterranean off the coast of Naples, Capri was a place where literary and artistic free spirits took refuge, and one where rich people went to be smart together. Greene, a man covetous of his privacy, bought a small house there in 1948 in order to be "away" occasionally. Hazzard and her husband, the critic and translator Francis Steegmuller, came to know him there in the late 1960s after a chance meeting in a restaurant when Hazzard, sitting at a nearby table, capped a line from Browning for which she heard him straining his prodigious memory.

Shirley Hazzard gives us the Graham Greene of the breakfast or cocktail table.

That was a scene, as Hazzard admits, fit for a novel by Graham Greene. But the friendship struck that night, lasting till Greene's death, was genuine. Hazzard does not avow the most intimate knowledge of Greene. Nor does she exploit the relationship to reveal sides of his life or character that remain largely none of our business. Instead she reveals the man without laying him bare. That she does this while still holding the reader rapt is a tribute not only to her subject but to her own literary skill. This is a portrait at once affectionate and keen.

Those of us who enjoy Greene's work while knowing little about him discover a few surprises here, some of them quite gratifying. Given his predilection for the darker sides of human nature, as well as his peculiarly Catholic—if also idiosyn-

Mr. Simmons is director of the Dow journalism program at Hillsdale College.

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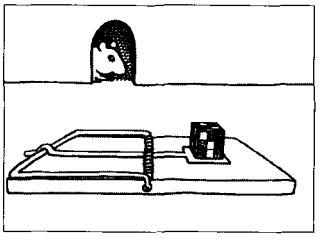
cratic—view of sin and guilt, the author of *The Power and the Glory*, *The End of the Affair*, and *Brighton Rock* was, in his unbuttoned moments, no renegade but a quietly literary man. He lived for words and books. What is for some a bit of ornamental trapping to life was for him of the essence. Hazzard writes that for Greene, literature was "the longest and most consistent pleasure" of an otherwise troubled life.

Poetry, for example, both high and low, flowed through his veins. Greene, though himself a bestselling novelist, was no follower of trends in literature, reading less of contemporary poets and writers as he got older. He preferred the old slippers. Hazzard recalls several incidents when, over drinks or dinner, the band of two or four would delightedly discuss at length one word or line from a favorite poem, swishing it about as they would a fine cabernet. Words mattered. This was a time when literary people, despite their lunacies, were still literary—not just celebrities, but men and women of intellectual power with capacious memories, "beneficiaries of . . . 'the inevitable solace that right language brings.'" There may not be many like them left. Minds were bred differently then, and reading of their casual conversations provides a porthole view on a vanishing world.

Hazzard gives us the Greene of the breakfast or cocktail table. He decries the modernity asserting itself on the island, destroying the old family and seasonal ways. He simmers, still, over the review A. J. Liebling gave *The Quiet American* in 1956. We discover his high regard for Henry James and Joseph Conrad (which we might have guessed) and for Francis Parkman (which we might not have). We also learn of Greene's unobtrusive generosity to penurious writers, posting off checks in a pinch—acts unexpected in light of his fabled insularity.



Like many another man of extraordinary talent, though, Greene could be a pill. Sometimes a wretched host with a bad temper, he couldn't concede a point in argument, however contrite he was to the offended party the next day. His anti-Americanism in the backwash of Vietnam—usually irrational and, when rational, irrationally expressed—is well known; Hazzard and Steegmuller, both Americans, took his rants good-naturedly. He could be agreeable only on his own terms. Still, even his exasperating traits tend to endear him in the reading, as they seem to have done in life.

His friend Malcolm Muggeridge called the peripatetic Greene one of "nature's displaced persons," congenitally unable to be content in a room—except when working. It was a temperament that wafted him around the world, yearning, in Hazzard's words, "to exchange one kind of unhappiness for another." But it also fueled some of the finest writing of our time. For Greene's best work was always, like that of any great or even good writer, "intuitive of the long echo in human affairs."

Greene kept interesting company on Capri, and Hazzard trots out a worthy cast of literary characters. Some of them, like Norman Douglas, she and Steegmuller never knew. Others, like Harold Acton—a dandy from Greene's Oxford years—they did. Hazzard has a novelist's eye for significant detail. Her sketch of Acton makes for a calm and measured portrait of decent and civilized humanity: "His talk had a Western brilliance of vocabulary and wit, a prevailing openness to seriousness as well as to variety and absurdity"; from him "one brought away unique lightness, tolerance, a sense of joy." Acton's companionship over a drink we might have chosen over Greene's.

Island locals fare just as well, even the oddballs, like Dr. Elizabeth Moor of Vienna. The "Dottoressa Moor" was jealous of Greene's attentions and had a knack for the blunt declaration, such as: "I would like to live in a state of men only. Women should be eradicated."

Hazzard isn't such bad company herself. Her memoir is suffused with personality and spiced with the deft turn of phrase. Many comprehensive biographies are now too long, but this brief day trip takes us where she would have us go, entertains, amuses, informs, and sets us on our way. She could have told us more. We can be glad she didn't. **NR**

■ CITY DESK ■

Tunnel Vision

RICHARD BROOKHISER

"THE people ride in a hole in the ground." But what do they read when they ride?

Murray Kempton once wrote that the New York newspaper columnist has one shot at capturing the heart and attention of the outer-borough kid riding the subway who's moved to Manhattan and questioning the world for the first time—so the columnist has to make it good. It was a thrush's aria, lovely and sentimental, like much that Kempton wrote, but it isn't true anymore. People don't read English-language newspapers in the subways, except the sports sections of tabloids.

■

Subway ads speak to the soul of man underground.

■

They read Bibles, often in Spanish, and Korans; also evangelical tracts, usually clever (election-season picture of a donkey and an elephant: "TOO CLOSE TO CALL!" Inside: "God has voted for you, Satan has voted against you! You break the tie!"). Drugstore-rack paperbacks are always read by women (women are the guardians of literacy; who will guard quality?). Teenagers read *Jane Eyre*, because they have to. College-age Asians read ringbound manuals of computing/chartered accountancy/the-careers-that-will-make-them-rich. You do see foreign-language newspapers. I once sat next to a Japanese man reading a paper in Portuguese, and puzzled, until I remembered that thousands of Japanese went to Brazil early in this century as sugar-cane cutters. Here was a descendant. A pale, thin youth once read the *Daily Worker* at my side, then ostentatiously left it behind on the seat.

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(Party discipline, to educate the masses?) Another time, I found a leaflet on my chosen spot that I thought to be the product of his left-wing cousins, railing against Israeli Gestapo tactics. On closer reading, it turned out to be the work of ultra-Orthodox Jews, for whom the state of Israel is a humanist impertinence.

Easiest to read, however, because they spare me the rudeness of peering over people's shoulders, or the difficulty of reading upside down, are the ads running just under the subway cars' ceilings. They speak to the soul of man underground.

The souls of underground men and women have aching feet. Podiatrists think so, because they are heavy advertisers. Many subway riders work two jobs; they also tend to carry a lot of overweight. Corns and bunions are the enemy.

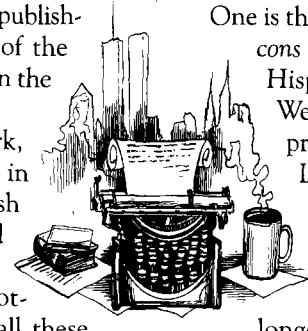
Skin is another concern. DOES YOUR FACE LOOK LIKE A PIZZA? No, nobody asks that, but that's the fear they address. The most ambitious private subway advertiser is Dr. —, the "board-certified dermatologist." As he has grown more prosperous, his ads have become busier and more colorful, and he has taken to reproducing his own face. Not handsome: He resembles former congressman Stephen Solarz. But his cheeks are smooth and shiny as a toilet bowl. With a potion or a peel, yours could be too.

■

Will Julio and Marisol find happiness? Will they use condoms?

■

Occasionally you see an ad for a trashy book, and another grievance for authors to nourish against publishers. Why isn't my history of the War of 1812 being pushed on the Lexington Avenue line?



But since this is New York, the lost hope of socialism in one city, the subway ads push lots of exhortation and social services. Are you being beaten? Call this hotline. Are you pregnant? Call these abortionists. Do you need a green card?—asked in numerous languages, including Creole, the French Ebonics. *Nou pale krayol*, one helpful ad boasted. You better; ignorance would put you on the level of John Rocker. Then there are Julio and Marisol, hero and heroine of the cartoon AIDS-education campaign. They are a Hispanic couple who have gone through worries about AIDS (SIDA in the almost-mirror Spanish-language versions) for a couple of years now. Friends sicken and end up in hospital beds. A tarty former bad-girl-friend of Julio's was struck down. Will they find happiness? Will they use condoms?

Two problems with Julio and Marisol leap out at the reader, besides SIDA. One is the tactful omissions: no *maricons* in this strip; no black faces, Hispanic or otherwise, either. We wouldn't want the Rev. Al protesting stereotyping on the L train. The other problem is also an omission: good drawing. This is a silver, if not quite a golden, age of cartooning. The no-longer-alternative press churns cartoonists out; the craft is very conscious of its techniques, and worshipful of great predecessors, like Jack Cole. Despite all that, Julio and Marisol move, with mannequin stiffness, through frames as imaginative as mug shots. If a child drew figures as rigid as these, he would be subjected to a battery of psychological tests, ending with anatomically correct dolls.

But in all this dreary uplift, there is an oasis: a feature called Poetry in Motion: snippets of verse, no longer than 20 lines, with the poet's name and dates. Though they have yet to run Ezra Pound's "In a Station of the Metro," the whole idea, like Pound's poem itself, is urban haiku: the apparition, in the riffling deck of perception, of a queen, or a joker.

Now the bad news. The global economy has found even the subway, and whole cars are being bought by single advertisers, whose style is printed television: endless repetition of almost the same thing. Capering, snuggling black teenagers wear painted-on pirate's hats or cloaks, while from around the torn corners leers a bearded old rogue, logo for spiced rum: THE CAPTAIN WAS HERE. Here, and everywhere. **NR**

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■ FILM ■

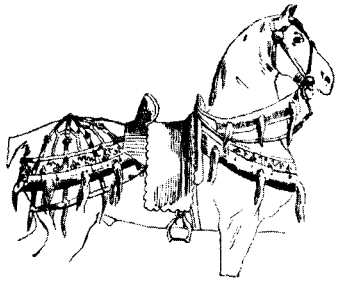
More Clouds than Sun

JOHN SIMON

CONSIDERABLE as is the artistic achievement of ***Sunshine***, its historical, social, and philosophical importance is greater yet. Compressed into three hours is a family chronicle that could be fully encompassed only by a long novel or TV series. It is the story of the Jewish Sonnenschein family in Hungary, from the late 19th to the late 20th century.

Aaron Sonnenschein invented a highly profitable herbal elixir named Sunshine, which is what the family name means in German. Aaron's inventiveness also caused his death in an explosion at his Eastern European distillery. His son Emmanuel escapes to Budapest with the formula, where thriving, large-scale business with the elixir makes the family wealthy. As the new century arrives, they naively toast it as an age of peace and prosperity.

The renowned Hungarian director István Szabó made the movie from a script written by himself and the American playwright-scenarist Israel Horovitz. The main thread is the relationship between Jews and Gentiles under various forms of government, and how tolerance and persecution alternated or even coexisted, sometimes ludicrously, at other times tragically.



Another theme is adherence to or rebellion against ancient Judaic laws. Thus when Emmanuel's son Ignatz falls in love with his orphaned cousin and adoptive sister Valerie, they marry despite intense parental opposition on religious grounds. Then there is the political thread: Ignatz, a liberal imperialist, worships Emperor Franz Joseph; his younger brother, Gustave, outraged by social injustice, turns radical socialist. Valerie, whom both love, stays in the middle as an enlightened Hungarian nationalist.

The question of assimilation is a further thread as the Sonnenscheins, under pressure, change their name to Sors—the Hungarian, as well as the Latin, for fate—with symbolic and also socioeconomic implications. The liberal lawyer Ignatz can thus become a judge, whose politics so alienate Valerie that she leaves him for Gustave, to return only when her husband becomes mortally ill.

Hungary, under its fascist dictator Horthy, drifts ever closer to Nazism. Ignatz and Valerie's older son, Istvan, is a doctor married to the fierce Greta; Adam, the younger, becomes a champion fencer, who, for admission to the elite military fencing club, must convert to Catholicism. Receiving religious instruction with the Sorses is the beautiful Hanna; though already affianced, she falls for Adam's impassioned wooing and superb fencing, and marries him. Adam leads the Hungarian fencing team to a gold medal at the 1936 Berlin Olympics, even as Greta, ferociously in love with him, overcomes his staunch sexual resistance.

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Sunshine is the cinematic equivalent of what the French call _roman fleuve_, the novel as a sweeping river.

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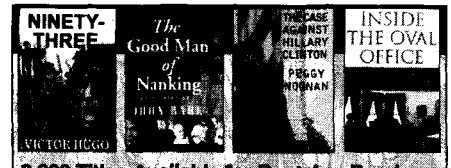
Despite warnings and job offers from America, Adam, a loyal Hungarian, rejects emigration. A national sports hero, he foresees no danger to Jews until, at the advent of World War II, he and his son, Ivan, end up in the same forced-labor battalion. When Adam refuses to play the groveling Jew to a military bully, he is put to a particularly hideous death while his son, like the others, impotently looks on. Later, Hanna, Istvan, and Greta also perish, but Valerie, as wise as she is good, is hidden by friends and survives.

Ivan witnesses his father's posthumous vindication and, to help ferret out former Nazis, joins the secret police. There follow pell-mell betrayals and remorse, prison and liberation, expropriation and partial reinstatement. Throughout, Valerie remains the unwobbling pivot, lending moral support to all, especially to Ivan, and is joined by her son Gustave, back from political exile in France and still a dedicated radical. When she dies serenely in a crowded hospital ward, her silver-tipped cane is left to Ivan. Like the golden pocket watch, passed in *Sunshine* from fathers to sons, this, too, becomes a symbol: paternal gold and maternal silver.

The film may be a bit fraught with symbols, like those two Meissen cups broken in different times and circumstances, their shards gathered each time with loving care. Valerie takes up photography, often making group portraits of her evolving family. The camera is the eye of history, and justifies inclusion in the film also of technically dissimilar newsreel sequences of momentous occasions.



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Some details defy categorization. Early on, Valerie accidentally takes a snapshot of herself removing something (a pebble?) from her bare toes; much later, on a museum visit abroad, the spellbound Adam views the antique statue of the Boy Removing a Thorn, in the same pose as Valerie's in the photograph. For me, this speaks of a confluence of life and art, of eternal recurrence, and of beauty even in painful situations. You must similarly

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The film enjoys István Szabó's consistently expert direction, but the ultimate triumph is the acting.

■

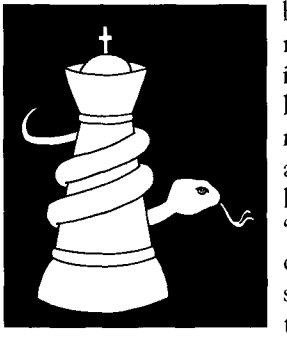
derive your own interpretations of the fate of the black booklet containing the formula of the elixir, and of another significant name change at film's end.

Certain objections to the movie raised elsewhere seem to me unfounded. The brutality of Adam's death shows both the moral victory to be snatched from horrible, humiliating defeat and the permanence of anti-Semitism that, often dormant, never dies. The frequent sex scenes are not gratuitous; the sex, wholesome or not, is life-sustaining. As the great Hungarian poet Miklós Radnóti, himself a victim of fascism, wrote in a poem, "the taste of kisses in my mouth is now honey, now cranberry": Lovemaking varies pointedly. Ignatz and Valerie's premarital sex is rapturous; Adam's adulterous sex with his sister-in-law, Greta, is the meeting of two diverse furies; Ivan's sex with Major Carola Kovacs, the opportunistic wife of a high-ranking Communist, is, during the time of purges, anguished, frenetic, desperate. Significantly, we never see the lovemaking of Adam and his gentle wife, Hanna.

The *New York Times* reviewer questioned the film's language, e.g., Ignatz's grantedly clichéd postcoital comment to Valerie, "When I'm lying in your arms, I feel I've come home." But consider: The scene is Vienna, where Ignatz is studying and homesick for Budapest; bear in mind, too, the not fully assimilated Jew's hunger for a true home. Besides, this is immediately followed by Ignatz's deflationary "I have to pee," and Valerie's giggly "So do I."

Sunshine enjoys the consistently expert direction of Szabó and the masterly cinematography of Lajos Koltai, a force both in Europe and in Hollywood. The grandmaster of movie music, Maurice Jarre, has composed a score based on Schubert's two-piano Fantasy in F Minor, which we also hear in an orchestral, a one-piano, and, poignantly, one-finger version from a child.

The ultimate triumph is the acting. Ralph Fiennes changes just enough to be equally right, both similar and dissimilar, as Ignatz, Adam, and Ivan; Jennifer Ehle is adorable as the young Valerie; so, too, is her real-life mother, Rosemary Harris, as the older one. Noteworthy too are James Frain and John Neville as the youthful and the elderly Gustave, respectively; Molly Parker (Hanna); Rachel Weisz (Greta); William Hurt as a decent commissar; and the great Hungarian actress Mari Töröcsik as an elderly servant. (Töröcsik's is a nonspeaking part, for the simple reason that the actress doesn't speak English.) I always have problems with Deborah Kara Unger, but her grasping, fickle Carola is properly predatory.



Sunshine is the cinematic equivalent of what the French call *roman fleuve*, the novel as a sweeping river. In the present case, the mighty flow more than excuses the footling flaws. **NR**

■ BOOKS IN BRIEF ■

The Total View of Taftly, by Scott Morris (Hill Street, 207 pp., $18.95)

TAFTLY HARPER, after a lifetime of heftiness, has jogged himself skinny. This, he thinks, will enable him to live up to the example of his illustrious granddaddy—for whom his hometown, the southern hamlet of Copiah Springs, is named—and, more important, to find love in the arms of an equally fit woman. This, Taftly feels certain, is the Total View—his destiny, as seen from God's vantage point. But sadly, it is not to be. After looking for love at a local watering hole, he finds himself trampled beneath the unwanted advances of the grotesquely obese Clydesdale twins, Trixie and Trina, an experience so horrifying it leaves him wondering if there is a Total View waiting for him at all.

So begins Scott Morris's debut novel, a deft combination of John Kennedy Toole and Carl Hiaasen, by turns hilarious and brooding. The lovably neurotic Taftly moves out to the lake on the edge of town to ponder his fate, and is befriended (Taftly would say "tormented") by Dennis Jolly, a shirtless, bodybuilding, shack-dwelling, ne'er-do-well handyman who insists that his receding hairline is the result of a government experiment and that aliens are trying to abduct him. As Morris puts it: "Evolution could never account for Dennis Jolly. He seemed to have been a mistake of proportions that could only find explanation in the existence of a malevolent deity." Convinced that Taftly is a "tortured genius," Dennis secretly records his ramblings, planning to sell the tapes for $9.95 a pop. Meanwhile, Taftly receives a death threat from a soon-to-be-released con.

Everything here seems a little strange, but it's all perfectly normal in Copiah Springs. Morris knows what all southerners know: that otherwise bizarre behavior makes sense in hot, sticky locales; that once the humidity reaches a certain level, the limits to human peculiarity fall away.

With *The Total View of Taftly*, Morris has managed a rare feat—a novel that is at once bawdy and tender, probing, and wise. The message here has to do with the importance of faith, of believing in the Total View even when it isn't apparent. Despite the kookiness that surrounds him, Taftly is marvelously true-to-life, as when he goes on a date with a pretty college student and is swept away: "Everything she told him was exactly right in the way that nitrous oxide is exactly right." By the time Taftly's destiny has finally come into focus, the reader is convinced that Scott Morris's novel is a little like that coed. Call it nitrous oxide with a side of grits.

—CRISTOPHER RAPP

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WILLIAM F. BUCKLEY JR.

Clinton at the Bar

NEW YORK, MAY 23

CONCERNING the proposed disbarment of William Jefferson Clinton, a few observations:

1. The movement, in Arkansas, can't be dismissed as political. The inquiry was set into motion by a finding of a special committee of the bar whose jurisdiction is disbarment actions. There are 14 members of this committee, six of whom addressed the question of Mr. Clinton. Two complaints had been filed. The first, by a conservative organization based in Atlanta; the second, by federal judge Susan Webber Wright.

Now Judge Wright is indeed the same judge who ruled Clinton to be in contempt of court by his testimony in the Paula Jones suit, fining him $90,000. But it was also Judge Wright who threw Paula Jones's case out of court in April 1998, ruling that the civil suit was insubstantial. That ruling did not preclude a ruling on the testimony that had been given by Mr. Clinton. The disbarment finding was made by five lawyers and one retired schoolteacher, and will now be considered by a circuit judge in Arkansas.

2. If the recommendations of the bar committee are followed, the judge would proceed to disbar. But at that point Mr. Clinton could appeal to the Arkansas supreme court, against whose findings Clinton attorney David Kendall would have no place to turn, except perhaps the *Magna Carta*.

3. There would be no practical consequence in finding Mr. Clinton unfit to practice law in Arkansas. The legal establishment there might as well rule that Mr. Clinton can't practice medicine. He has no intention of putting out a shingle, in the style of Thomas Dewey, and actually proceeding to practice law. He did practice briefly between his first and second terms as governor of Arkansas, but there are no indications whatever that he would consider the law professionally in 2001. It is expected that he would lecture, teach, write, and argue before nonlegal bodies on political-policy issues.

Richard Nixon was disbarred in New York some time after Watergate, but had sought no role in the practice of law.

4. Why, then, go to the trouble? Well, forces were set in motion by Mr. Clinton's testimony, and it is absolutely clear to the Arkansas supreme court's Committee on Professional Conduct that Clinton lied under oath.

Now on this matter, cultural questions are applicable. David Kendall has announced, on behalf of the president, that a vigorous defense will be raised. On what will it hinge?

Well, witness Clinton told the grand jury, in reply to questions touched off by the Paula Jones lawsuit, that he had never had sexual relations with Monica Lewinsky. Ah, well. What he had with Monica is, in the view of the Committee on Professional Conduct—sexual relations. But Mr. Clinton's defense, all along, has been that what-he-did isn't really sexual relations, whence the great epistemological furor of 1999, generated by Mr. Clinton's words, "that depends on what the meaning of 'is' is." It is possible, indeed likely, that Mr. Kendall will argue that Arkansas is a . . . primitive part of the greater redneck culture, and down there if you kiss a girl on the hand, they're going to say you had sexual relations with her.

Since some attention is correctly given (by legal men of affairs) to the question, "Did the defendant *intend* to lie?" the supreme court of Arkansas, the final arbiter on the question, may be persuaded by such a line of argument: to wit, when Mr. Clinton said he hadn't done X, he really didn't think he *had* done X.

5. Well, there is no substantial argument for simply aborting the whole procedure. In the first place, you can't legally do so. In the second place, the law exacts consummation of inquiries raised by appropriate arms of the law. And only Arkansas has this bit in its mouth: Did Clinton commit perjury to the point of warranting ejection from the bar?

6. Those who believe the inquiry should proceed in an orderly way need not believe that Mr. Clinton should be punished in any palpable way. He does not intend to practice law in Arkansas. And the governor of Arkansas might find some way to dilute the disbarment with clemency of sorts. This would not be easy to phrase, but the design of it could be that Mr. Clinton's mendacity should not be raised in any other proceeding in Arkansas intended to honor, or memorialize President Clinton. An adaptation of the executive clemency idea; entirely appropriate.

"Yes, but it's a little more serious than just a code of conduct."

The Universalist Candidate

NEW YORK, MAY 26

I JOINED recently with a group who were urging the reelection of William Roth to a sixth term in the Senate. Sen. Roth is well remembered by those who care about taxes and supply-side economics. He was cosponsor of the famous Kemp-Roth bill, which, as introduced (it was slightly modified), called for a three-time, 10 percent, top-to-bottom reform in federal tax levies. There was no nonsense about insulating the rich: The idea was evenhanded reform, and a generation later, Bill Roth became chairman of the Senate Finance Committee.

Roth now has a vexing problem. He is well connected, but he needs $4 million to make his race as designed, and that is a lot of money for a state as small as Delaware, given the limitation on the sum of money people are permitted to spend on other people. What is especially vexing is that television in Delaware comes in from Philadelphia, Baltimore, and Washington. What this means is that for every dollar spent on political advertising intended to influence Delaware citizens, 95 cents spills off into neighboring states, of no use whatever to William Roth, and of zero interest to non-Delaware voters.

Now the same problem, on a lesser scale, hits candidates in New Jersey, who need to rely on New York and Philadelphia stations, losing a gob of TV money that flutters off to non-New Jersey voters. This is a very real problem, but not a problem at all to Jon Corzine. You see, he is very, very rich, and so anxious to become a U.S. senator that he has already spent $25 million. The record

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expenditure for a Senate seat has been Michael Huffington's in California in 1994. At the rate Corzine is going ($300,000 per day), he will outpace Huffington before he is through with the primary, and already has done so hugely on a per capita voter scale, California being about four times more populous than New Jersey.

What is Jon Corzine so excited about, the usual concerns of vanity to one side? Well, Mr. Corzine is best described as a universalist. He is a middle westerner who got a degree from the University of Chicago, came to New York, enrolled in Goldman Sachs, before long found himself head dog of Midas, Inc., and decided to stop making money for himself and instead to treat everybody else to money belonging to everybody else. What happens, of course, is that people end up receiving from Washington the money they just finished sending to Washington, or perhaps only a part of it. Candidate Corzine was embarrassed, in a recent debate with primary contender Jim Florio, to be reminded that a while ago he had lamented that New Jersey was only getting 65 cents back from Washington for every dollar remitted to Washington.

Anyway, like Roth, Corzine has the undifferentiated-dollar problem going to television ads, but unlike Roth, he can afford extravagance in search of his universalist aims. These are, to read from his own campaign literature:

"Universal health-care coverage;

"Universal long-term care;

"Universal quality public education

[What would he do with non-quality teachers? Fire them? He might discuss this with the American Federation of Teachers.];

"Universal gun registration and licensing;

"Universal access and opportunity."

The only universals left out are universal beauty, brains, and enterprise; perhaps Jon Corzine will work on that tectonic fault in the human structure, but that argument will probably carry over into another world.

We have then in Delaware and in New Jersey a common anomaly: the political dollar that can't hope to reach the intended voters without a huge attrition, adding up to dollars wasted, and political effort misspent. Is there anything to be learned from this extravagance? Or is the sad lesson of it that more and more we are heading into situations in which only the rich can successfully contend? Those who worry whether there would then be ideological competition need hardly lose patience. Jon Corzine is one more example of rich ignorance. The idea of universalizing prosperity by edict, rather than growth, is hospitably received in the homes and offices of the wealthy. Such impulses are very much to be welcomed and applauded when they evolve in individual contributions to the needy (Jon Corzine subsidizes eight parochial schools), but the itch quickly transforms to giving others' money to needy enterprises and when that is done resolutely enough, everybody who doesn't live in the Cayman Islands loses out.

So here are two races rich in symbolism. The dutiful senator who respects private wealth, and the aspirant senator who deplores it.

Illegitimize Fujimori?

NEW YORK, MAY 30

DOES anyone really know how many Peruvians want Fujimori back in for a third term? No. The players deal with numbers (52 percent, 17 percent, 30 percent), but don't generally go any deeper. Fujimori says he got over 50 percent, critics say that the number is invalid, as witness the protest votes filed by backers of Mr. Toledo, who withdrew from the race and urged his supporters to deface their ballots. And in blows our State Department, protesting the illegitimacy of the Peruvian operation.

There is no substitute for trying again and again to improve things, but Peruvian democracy, in the sense we use that term, is as near as we can get to a lost cause. In 1962, President Kennedy berated Peru on a military coup that took the election away from Haya de la Torre, a legendary freedom fighter/social reformer engaged in Peruvian politics for a generation. Then the military eased out and there was a sort-of democratic election. Then there was a military coup. Then there was another election. Then there was a military takeover, dominated by a general ignorant of economics and inflamed by populist slogans. Then a new constitution and an austerity program. Then a Maoist insurrectionary force (the Shining Path) and the Cuban-inspired Tupac Amaru Revolutionary Movement that tortured and killed 25,000 Peruvians, most of them peasants. Against those terrorists, a socialist government made no headway.

Then came Alberto Fujimori.

He succeeded in detecting the Maoist leader, imprisoning him, immobilizing his movement, effecting some popular reforms. But he ran into problems, among them the revolutionists who seized the Japanese embassy at a Christmas party in 1996, taking hostage what seemed like half of the diplomatic community of Lima. Weeks went by, and finally one morning Fujimori's military-intelligence people sneaked in and killed the hostage-takers; and, a year or so later, time for another election.

In approximately 40 years, the United States has traveled from a denunciation of Peruvian political practice to a denunciation of Peruvian political practice.

The scene is very disheartening for those who believe that every day, in every way, the world gets better and better. It doesn't. What generated under President Fujimori is a state-of-the art military intelligence, which, however, engages in torture. The Peruvian tradition of getting and keeping power is very tough stuff. The Tupac Amaru were, after all, inflamed by a man who was executed by the Spaniards after grisly torture—200 years ago. The Incas, 200 years before that, were a brutal people—as were the Spaniards of that age—and the refinements of a distinguished and educated aristocratic class of Peruvians never translated into a resolute commitment to the kind of democracy we are comfortable with.

But what is accomplished by advertising to the world that we consider the government of Fujimori to be "illegitimate"? Fujimori has obviously the character of the politician who falls in love with power and, like Suharto in Indonesia, would just as soon stick around until he is forced out, rather than let himself be superannuated by the democratic process. Fujimori can't be forgiven the torture used by his military, but we say that from the kind of serenity we luxuriate in as a society without any concern over a native terrorist organization, which (applying comparative terms), killed a quarter-million Americans in recent history.

Why doesn't the State Department just do what we do with China? Have we ever got around to saying that the government of China is illegitimate?

The focus should be to identify and deplore human-rights abuses, and shaky democratic practices are something other than that. What is correct to do is what Amnesty International and Human Rights Watch do—train on individual cases of human-rights abuse.

And then too, it is just possible that Fujimori is concerned not only for his own prospects, but also for those of Peru, struggling on and on and on with the instability it has suffered from for so long.

—UNIVERSAL PRESS SYNDICATE

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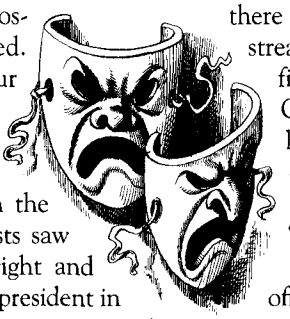
■ THE MISANTHROPE'S CORNER ■

FLORENCE KING

A GREAT debate is currently sweeping the land: "What've you got? Clinton fatigue or Clinton nostalgia?"

We like to think that we line up squarely on one side or the other according to our politics, but, as with everything involving Clinton, it's not that simple, especially since he fashioned triangulation into the new Gordian Knot. We have all turned into hard little bumps of tangled threads, unable to tell our strands apart.



Liberals, who should be nostalgic, are secretly fatigued. Civil-rights mavens saw our first black president cut off welfare; the working classes saw our first Marco Polo Democrat put their jobs on the take-out menu; and feminists saw themselves blame victims right and left to keep our first feminist president in office.

Conservatives, who should be fatigued, are secretly nostalgic. Economic conservatives have got it into their heads that the departure of Mr. Wall Street will somehow hex the market; libertarians are leery about "restoring decency"; and social conservatives are showing signs of Slouching Withdrawal Syndrome, like the champion of family values who recently mesmerized a call-in show with a classic Freudian slip: "Bill Clinton has turned America into Sodom and Good Morning."

A measure of our unresolved conflicts is the attention being paid to his leaving office. Not speculations about future jobs or books, but the actual moment when he will no longer be president. Pundits frequently spell it out, as in "at 12:01 P.M. on January 20, 2001"—what will happen to Bill Clinton?

It's not a bird, it's not a plane, it's Cinderella Man hovering like an animated sword of Damocles, making sure we realize how much he loves being president. Since his final-year countdown began this past January 20, he's been spelling it out every chance he gets, marshalling batteries of wistful smiles and plangent tones to express how much he dreads the day when this best of all possible jobs comes to an end and he is forced to leave his beloved White House.

These performances have given rise to an inordinate amount of what-iffing about a third term. Even though the Constitution forbids it, pollsters have been asking—just for fun—if people would vote for him again, and pundits have been analyzing—just for fun—the responses. But underneath all the fun there courses a murky underground stream. So far, no one has identified it for what it is, but Cinderella Man threw out a hint when reporters asked him —just for fun—if he would like a third term. His reply: "I'd do it forever if I could."

Did anybody but me hear the off-key zither music that horror movies use to cue the maniac? I can't be the only one, because back when Y2K loomed, several commentators speculated—just for fun—that he might use the crisis as an excuse to declare a national emergency and cancel the election. There have also been some jokes and cartoons lately about carrying him, kicking and screaming, from the White House, so I am not alone in thinking what I'm thinking, only in giving it a name:

Presiphrenia.

Given his known emotional fragility, the nostalgia-vs.-fatigue chatter comes across as a parlor game we have devised to distract ourselves from a subconscious but widespread uncertainty about what he might do if he's not president. The situation is rife with possibilities. Even if he vacates the White House peaceably at the appointed time, he still could form a government in exile and become a rallying point for partisan malcontents for years to come. If you think it can't happen, repeat after me: Bonnie Prince Charlie. At least Charlie was called a "pretender to the throne." Our practice of calling ex-presidents "Mr. President" is a can of worms ready for parsing, the ultimate hair begging to be split.

Since he may well be more dangerous out of the White House than in it, I have devised a plan to neutralize him: Make him President Without Portfolio for life. He would not have any duties, but he could do all the things he enjoys: live in the White House, fly on Air Force One, go to Camp David, and be serenaded with "Hail to the Chief." To keep busy, he could make himself useful in small ways, such as raising and lowering the flag. The sight of him up on the roof, tugging ropes at precise hours each day, would solidify his legacy for all time: the American Quasimodo.

My plan is based on the "hair of the dog" principle of hangover cures; we've had too much Clinton, so what we need now is more Clinton, not a new president. Let's face it: We're afraid to elect another president because neither candidate is even bearable, much less admirable. We used to be philosophical about our mediocrities, telling ourselves that someday a great leader would emerge and we would have another Adams or Roosevelt, but now we know it's never going to get any better. We don't even have a choice between the lesser of two evils anymore; it's boiled down to which one is less nerve-racking.

To give ourselves a much-needed vacation from presidential politics, we should cancel Election 2000 and every presidential election thereafter until Clinton leaves the White House feetfirst in, say, a quarter of a century or so. As for who will do what is laughably called "running the country," we could try a rotating office of National Manager to be filled by the nation's governors. If we restricted the terms to six months, we wouldn't have time to get sick of anybody.

Who knows? We might even find that we don't need a president. I know for a fact that D.C. doesn't need a mayor. When I was growing up, we were governed by three appointed commissioners whose names nobody could remember, plus the members of the District Committee, who might be anybody, but were usually Southern congressmen whose names we also forgot. We didn't know who appointed whom or who did what, and we didn't care. The city worked fine, and nobody pestered us about getting out the vote because there wasn't any.

Self-government is rewarding, if we just keep our heads. **NR**

Miss King can be reached at P. O. Box 7113, Fredericksburg, Va. 22404.

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Just like its companions in the Bill of Rights — freedoms of speech and religion and the press — the right to bear arms welcomes all who believe in its core principles of freedom. *It also welcomes differing views about how it's exercised.* Our mutual commitment must be to defend the freedom, not to defame its critics.

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Charlton Heston
Actor

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Wayne LaPierre, NRA Executive Vice President

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